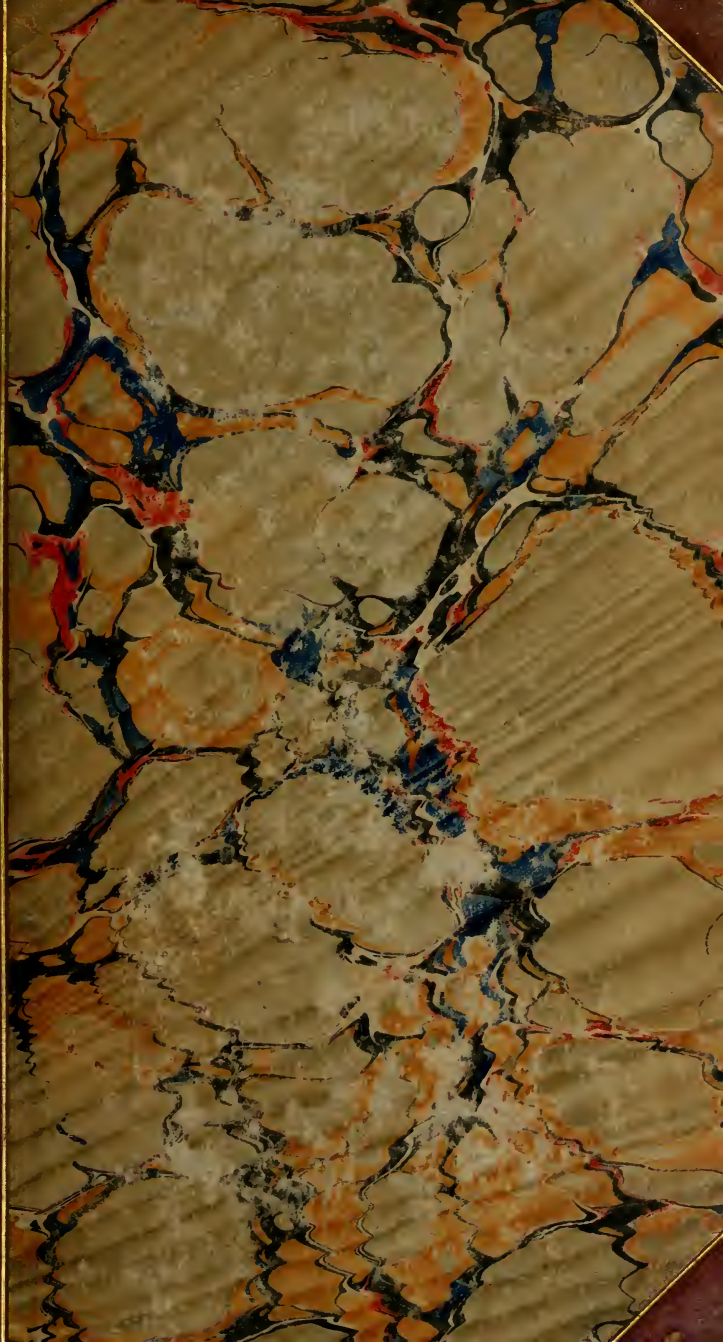


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HAPPINESS;

A TALE,

FOR THE

GRAVE AND THE GAY.

“ Quod petis hic est.”—*Horace*.

“ Seria cùm possim, quòd delectantia malim
Scribere, tu causa es lector.”—*Martial*.

“ Così à l'egro fanciul porgiamo aspersi
Di soave licor gli orli del vaso :
Suecchi amari ingannato intanto ei beve,
E da l'inganno suo vita receive.”—*Tasso*.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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H A P P I N E S S.

C H A P. I.

“Mosse! da prima quelle cose belle.”—*Dante.*

“Self flattered, unexperienced, high in hope,
When young, with sanguine cheer and streamers gay,
We cut our cable, launch into the world,
And fondly dream each wind and star our friend.”

Young.

“SO you really will not accompany me, Louisa,” said Emily Thornhill; “well, I only hope you will not die of *ennui*.”

“Indeed it would gratify me exceedingly,” replied Louisa, “for I like the Countess, and am always pleased with her parties; but the doctors say my mother must neither receive company nor pay visits, and I am sure she will not stay contentedly at home this evening, unless I promise to amuse her, a task in which I have been engaged for the last fortnight.” “That, to be

sure," rejoined Emily, "is an unanswerable objection, but you shall not tell me that you cannot go to Twaites's with me this morning." Louisa consented ; and the young ladies proceeded to the mantua-maker's. After the important choice of colours, patterns, and trimmings, had been definitively settled, as they were leaving the shop, they were met by Captain Dormer, one of those quizzical, half-boorish coxcombs, who annoy the gentler pedestrians of Bond-street, by their rude and obtrusive insolence. The Captain was a loungeur of no ordinary distinction ; he was also a jockey of uncommon merit. Unit- ing in his own person the extremes of a neck-and-nothing dasher in the chace, and of an exquisite dandy on the Mall, he rode his own horses at Newmarket, and piqued himself on being the best figure in a ball-room. This whimsical combination of heterogeneous characteristics, obtained for him among the ladies the enviable appellation of the *mad creature* ; one moment he would languish with a die-away softness, and the next almost stun you with the view halloo. Like most eminent men, he was the slave of ambition, and only differed from

them in mistaking notoriety for fame. He was delighted when any of his exploits were chronicled, and it is said was never more gratified than when he had given occasion to the following paragraph in the newspapers :

“ *Match.*—Captain D—— and Mr. L—— started on horseback from Richardson’s hotel, in London, at three o’clock on Monday morning, for the Castle-tavern, Brighton, for a wager of fifty guineas, and the horses they rode ; the race was won by Capt. D——, the horse of Mr. L—— having *fallen down dead*, near Crawley. The rider luckily escaped.”

By this *bel-esprit* Louisa and her companion were accosted : “ Ha ! Ladies searching for new weapons to assail us ! eh, Mrs. Twaites will have a great deal on her conscience for assisting you to commit so many murders.” “ I cannot tell what compunctious visitings may trouble Twaites on the subject ; but, for my own part, I do not think she is half so guilty of *malice prepense*, as the man who made your quizzing glass,” said Emily, laughing.

The Captain simpered ; but as he could not recollect a smart answer, and did not wish to be pursued farther, he turned to

Louisa to inquire after Lady Delaval. Louisa replied, that her mother was better, but still not well. The Captain accordingly expressed his sorrow and condolence : “ Sad thing—very sad thing ; but old women will die—no help for it. I wonder how she has contrived to live so long ; two physicians have been taking their steady aim for a fortnight,—double-barrelled gun—eh—can’t miss. Well, we must have a coroner’s inquest—Verdict, died by the visitation of the Doctors—ha ! ha ! ”

Shocked as Louisa was at his want of feeling, neither she nor Emily could forbear smiling at the Captain’s manner of expressing himself. Emily, however, ventured to expostulate with him, at least to say, that she thought sickness and death very unfit subjects for raillery. “ ’Pon honour, I did not think of what I was saying ; but I hate physic. I hope I did not hurt your feelings, Miss Delaval ; the good lady may live many years yet—sorry, very sorry to offend. I shall never survive your frowning and grave looks, Miss ‘Thornhill ! ” “ That’s an old story,” said Emily ; “ you cannot make us believe it now : at any rate it will not do for a scarecrow, for we have charity enough to

be very willing to sacrifice the pleasure of your company for the good of the undertaker."

"Oh, Miss Thornhill," stammered out the Captain, "indeed you are very cruel; I would not for the world be at your mercy for half an hour."

"You are very much afraid of us, it seems, and I suppose will not therefore venture to walk in," said Louisa, as they reached home. The Captain pleaded a particular engagement, which required his immediate attention, and with a whistle to his dog, that had strayed to the other side of the road, he bowed, and wished the ladies good morning.

"That creature you perceive," said Emily, "is on most excellent terms with himself; to be sure he has one advantage over his brother puppies;—he has an elegant person, and, in spite of all his efforts, has not quite lost the gentleman in the fop: then he is whimsical and tolerably good natured. What would you think of him as a lover, Louisa?"—"I will answer your question by asking another," replied Louisa; "What would you think of him as a hus-

band, Emily ?—Besides, is not the idea of a Dandy making love absurd and preposterous ? —Love ! such an animal is incapable of any passion but self-admiration, and is insensible to all charms but those which center in his own dear person. Captain Dormer in love ! whoever dreamed of such a thing !”

“ Do not be surprised, my dear Louisa,” rejoined Emily, “ if it should turn out that love is one of the Captain’s waking dreams at present. I have heard that he has serious thoughts of a matrimonial speculation ; and if I am not misinformed, a friend of *your’s* is the happy fair one.”

“ A friend of mine !” exclaimed Louisa (blushing crimson). “ Then it must be her fortune and connexions on which he has fixed the eyes of his rapacity.”—“ Have you then so mean an opinion of the merit of your friends,” said Emily, “ that you imagine their lovers must be attracted by what they *have*, rather than by what they *are* ?”

“ Whatever my opinion may be of the merit of my friends,” replied Louisa, “ the only merit which any woman can possess in the estimation of fops and gamblers, is a plentiful fortune. Perhaps you will inform

me who the happy fair one is, that has been so fortunate as to fix the roving heart of this gay Lothario?"—"That, my dear," said Emily, with an air of affected importance, "I am not at liberty to disclose. But time, that tells all secrets, will perhaps ere long blab this out; if not, as we are friends, I will tell you myself; for, in truth, I hate secrets, and never keep any but those I forget." Here the conversation relating to the Captain ended; and the party at the Countess's became the subject of speculation and discussion. Emily, though several years older than Louisa, was all vivacity; and talked with fluency and animation, of scenes on which her imagination dwelt, with unmingled delight. Louisa participated in the pleasure of her companion, and felt no little chagrin that she was compelled, by duty, to mope at home, while Emily was to be so happy in the circle of her dear five hundred friends; yet the feelings of Louisa were naturally of a more sober and profound character than those of her friend; and, though fashionable amusements attracted and pleased her, they did not engross her whole attention, and however she might have

once regarded them, she did not now view them as indispensable to the enjoyment of life. They suited well with the lighter stream of emotions that flowed and sparkled on the surface of her mind ; but were totally uncongenial with that deeper under current, which ran imperceptibly and without noise in an opposite direction.

As the character of Louisa will develop itself in the following pages, and as there are parts of her story which cannot be well understood without some account of her family, it may be proper to introduce it here.

Sir George Delaval, the father of Louisa, was a perfectly well bred man of the world. He possessed naturally a good understanding, and might have been reckoned a man of talent, had it been well cultivated. He had a heart formed for friendship, and capable of enjoying the pleasures of domestic life, if the voice of nature had not been silenced amidst the hurry and confusion of the ever-shifting scenes of dissipation. But with every natural good tendency, he was the victim of a fashionable education, and the slave of a fashionable wife. He was de-

scended from a line of ancestors, who were distinguished for their attachment to their native soil, who lived on their estate, and left it to their children, not only undiminished, but greatly improved. Sir George, however, unfortunately caught the mania now so prevalent of leaving his country residence to the care of a steward, while he spent the winter in London, and the summer months by the sea side. By this departure from the habits of his forefathers, he exposed himself to those temptations which few young men can resist ; and a compliance with which not only taints the purity and weakens the force of the moral principle, and thus destroys the character ; but also impairs the estate, and reduces the individual to be the sport of capricious fortune. Having by this means involved himself in pecuniary embarrassments, Sir George determined to form an alliance with some fair lady, whose property, added to his own, would extricate him from his difficulties. He wanted a fortune more than a wife ; but, as one could not be obtained without the other, he submitted to the necessity of choosing from the triflers of the day, a lady who had

a decent fortune at her own disposal. At that time the Misses Elmer were well known in every fashionable circle; their father, a wealthy banker, had left them the whole of his property; and it was generally supposed, as they had arrived at that period of life, when suitors become rather scarce; they would have no *violent* objection to enter into a matrimonial treaty with any gentleman of fortune and respectable connexions.

The affairs of Sir George being rather urgent, and as there was something in the younger Miss Elmer, that rendered her, in his view, a tolerably agreeable companion, the business was not long on the *tapis* before it was concluded; and the marriage produced as much felicity as those alliances usually do, where convenience and not affection is the only inducement to form them. Lady Delaval having never been educated to be a wife, it would be unjust to form an estimate of her character by the rigid rules of domestic economy. She was educated for show, and only regarded matrimony as an establishment for life. A husband she considered as chiefly desirable on account of the consequence he would attach

to her person, and the subserviency of his will and inclinations to her caprice. Possessing more natural strength of mind than Sir George, she felt her superiority, and was resolved to maintain it; and though her tyranny was sufficiently irksome, it was on the whole beneficial to his interests. Lady Delaval, while she yielded to the follies of fashion, did not suffer herself to be ensnared by its vices. Though she loved a little personal extravagance, her habits were not generally expensive. Indeed, it was on the point of his embarrassments, and his incapacity to manage his own fortune; that Lady Delaval always found herself able to silence and humble her spouse. Still her ladyship was unquestionably a woman of fashion. To be such, and of the highest ton, was the first wish of her heart up to a certain period. When, however, she became a mother, which happened a few years after her marriage, her maternal feelings which (to her honour be it spoken), it was not in the power of dissipation to subdue, led her to devote her undivided and anxious attention to her only daughter.

Conscious that her own glory was on the

wane, she was resolved to shine in the charms and accomplishments of her darling Louisa. Having formed in her imagination her *beau ideal* of excellence, which included in it little either of intellectual or moral worth, but was chiefly distinguished by the showy qualities which are calculated to excite momentary admiration, rather than to conciliate permanent affection, she desired to form the character of her daughter after this splendid model. Sir George readily acquiesced in her views, and as soon as the infant became capable of receiving the important instructions which were to form her into an automaton of fashion ; the house was filled with governesses and masters, and all the train whose business it is to stifle and torture the female mind, by forcing upon it, what Rousseau has called, “ the insignificant trash that has obtained the name of a polite education.” Lady Delaval was beyond measure delighted when she saw the object of her fond idolatry grow into an elegant figure and an engaging person, adorned with all the accomplishments which the Monsieurs, the Mademoiselles, the Signors, and the Signoras had so successfully laboured

to bestow upon her. She longed for the period when her amiable and lovely daughter should be ushered into the world, and was always talking to her of the conquests she would make, and the distinction she would command.

Thus flattered and caressed, Louisa soon fancied herself a prodigy. Her lively imagination painted scenes of future happiness, when, bright as the morning star, she was to adorn the hemisphere of fashion, and captivate all hearts. She spared no pains in qualifying herself for the conspicuous station she seemed destined to fill. To shine at a ball, to attract the *beaux* of distinction to her box at the opera, appeared to be the very acmè of felicity. How she longed for the approach of the first winter, when she was to make her *entrée* into life ! Present enjoyment was lost in expectation of the future. Sometimes, indeed, she would relieve the tedious interval, by amusing herself with some of our best authors, especially the living poets. She read with avidity and dangerous delight the love-witchery of Moore, and the sublime but demoralising extravagance of Byron ; with Scott, Southey

and Campbell, she was familiar ; and her sincere admiration of the latter, proved, that notwithstanding the corrupting influence of her favourites, she still retained a taste for natural simplicity and moral beauty. But the frivolities and dissipation with which she was surrounded, and the lessons of vanity which were instilled into her mind, hurried her away from intellectual pursuits.

C H A P. II.

“ How swift, how soon ye pass'd away,
Joys of my early hours.”—*Montgomery.*

“ Yet there was one in that gay shifting crowd
Sick at the soul with sorrow.”—*Cornwall.*

AT length the period arrived when Miss Delaval was to enter upon her brilliant career—

“ The world was all before her,”

So lovely did its scenes appear, so fair the blossoms which adorned her path, and so magnificent the enchanting prospect which opened to her view, that her youthful imagination was dazzled, and her whole soul absorbed in rapture and admiration. However the multitude with whom she associated might wear only “ the face of pleasure,” she possessed the reality. The cause of this may be easily imagined. A stranger

to mankind, all the scenes that she contemplated were adorned with the brightest hues of novelty. With what contempt would this ingenuous girl have heard it insinuated, that the emotions she now felt would one day be followed with satiety and disgust; and that when she had been used to this *every-day world*, its charms would fade away! This change, however, was not far distant. Before she was eighteen years of age, she began to suspect that every thing around her was artificial. She had many acquaintances, but among them all she could scarcely boast one friend. After having twice or thrice completed the revolution of fashionable pleasure, she sighed for some other method of spending her time; though flattered into a sufficiently good opinion of her beauty, she could not be always dressing and exhibiting herself to public view. The theatre, though enchanting at first, became insipid after she was accustomed to its scenes, and acquainted with the merit of its performers. To pay unmeaning visits, and in return to meet in her father's mansion a promiscuous crowd, with a tenth part of whom she could hold no intercourse, after

the novelty had ceased, became insipid and disgusting. She endeavoured, indeed, to reconcile herself to these things, by considering they were according to the mode, yet still she felt *ennui*. Perhaps there is not a more pitiable object in nature than a young woman, who, possessing a fine understanding and a heart of sensibility, is doomed to be the slave of opinion, and the sport of fashion. It is true, various expedients are contrived to preserve a female thus circumstanced from reflection. The great majority of this unenviable class of our fair countrywomen live entirely without thought, and thus are perfectly contented to be what they are. It is an invariable principle with them, that not to be fashionable is not to exist, and to this principle they sacrifice every thing for which life can be desirable. Miss Delaval, though no vulgar notions had been infused into her mind by her preceptors and associates, could not help sometimes thinking that she was a rational being formed for happiness; and she had the good sense to perceive, that the manner in which she had been educated, and the pursuits in which she was engaged, had little in them to satisfy her

reason, or to make her happy. In her own family, and in those with whom she was more particularly intimate, she found that a fashionable life was constantly at war with nature, and that to attain any eminence, and to give the *ton*, it was necessary to live and die a trifler. Though these thoughts would often intrude, they were never indulged, and were generally dissipated by

“ Fandango ball or rout.”

Among the *belles* of distinction, with whom Miss Delaval had formed an acquaintance, was Emily Thornhill. She was a girl whom folly could not satiate. Her chief excellencies were, an acute understanding, a vivacious temper, and a compassionate heart—her prevailing defect, the love of admiration, to which every thing most graceful and valuable in the female character was sacrificed. She lived on flattery. Wherever she appeared, she imagined herself the idol of the throng; and it must be owned, that the homage which was paid to her fortune and her beauty, not a little justified her vanity. Miss Thornhill had been introduced into what is called the world, much earlier than Louisa Delaval.

The latter, therefore, sought her as a desirable companion ; and Emily received her with the warmth of undissembled and generous friendship. It was from the habits of this lady, and the constraint which she was constantly imposing upon the best feelings of her heart, that Louisa was first led to sigh for the simple pleasures of unsophisticated life. With her, she would sometimes venture to converse on the subject, which, as it was by no means a pleasing topic, was soon dismissed to give place to the more welcome themes of dress and equipage. From Miss Thornhill, Louisa obtained such knowledge of the principal persons who figured in the gay circles, as induced her most sincerely to despise them. The secret history of men and women of fashion, allowing them to be the chroniclers of each other's fame, certainly does not exhibit them as models of virtue. Louisa, however, found it necessary to disguise her feelings. Sometimes she indulged her love of admiration, and was not a little gratified with the marked attentions of Sir Charles Clermont and Colonel Stanley, two of the most finished gentlemen of the age, who had persons of which they were vain,

affairs of honour of which they boasted, and morals of which only a man of fashion can be proud. These were the professed admirers of Louisa, but they had been equally the admirers of every new face. Though the vanity of Miss Delaval led her at first to overvalue her conquests, the acquaintance of a few days convinced her, that a woman of understanding and virtue must sacrifice her reputation for both in permitting the gallantries and attentions of avowed and shameless libertines.

In their gallantries she thought the discovered licentious passion, and in their pretensions a matrimonial scheme to repair a fortune, which play, expensive amours, and Bacchanalian orgies had embarrassed.

Every day her dissatisfaction visibly increased. The mind once roused to busy reflection, cannot easily return to its former state of torpid repose. To detect an error is to explode it. To discover that certain habits and pursuits are irrational, is at once to arm conscience and the better part of our nature against them. They may for a season retain a mechanical influence over us; but the understanding will condemn them, and

to the heart they will yield no permanent satisfaction. Custom, example, and ignorance of what is more worthy of our regard, may likewise increase their power, and hold us in slavish subserviency to their dominion; but we must frequently sigh under our bondage, and long to escape from it. Something of this kind Louisa began to feel at the period when her mother's indisposition commenced, and from which she appeared to be recovering, when Captain Dormer assailed her with the ludicrous expressions of his condolence. The evenings which her affection naturally induced her to spend in the sick room of her beloved parent, were therefore not so irksome and mopish as Emily had taught her to expect, and as she herself anticipated. Merely to absent herself from company, and the scenes of amusement to which she was accustomed, was no great sacrifice; and revolting as the chamber of disease certainly is to youth and vivacity, Louisa found that it had its uses and its pleasures too. She had more than once, in circles the most brilliant, been quite as melancholy, and with this difference, that when she returned, her gloom was deepened by regret. But in the

present instance, though she had much to endure from the fretfulness of the invalid, and the sympathy which her sufferings occasioned; yet the performance of duty was a cordial to her heart: her attentions were paid to one who needed them, whose pains they assuaged—who stood in the nearest relation to her, and whom she fondly loved. She relieved a mother's anguish; she was necessary to a mother's comfort: she was useful, and she was so far happy.

At length Lady Delaval recovered, and with her daughter returned to the world of fashion, where they were received with a thousand congratulations. Captain Dormer, deeply penetrated with her ladyship's *serious* indisposition, was happy to meet her renovated, as he said, and adorned with new charms, like the queen of flowers, or some other simile which he was not at leisure, or had not the ability to complete, and from which he escaped by a fulsome and equally extravagant compliment to Louisa. Every body had something civil to say, and in their very best manner, to a lady who was the life and soul of all their parties, whose fair daughter had just risen upon them as the morning

star of beauty, and who now shone brighter for her temporary eclipse. All this, and a great deal more, was said on the occasion ; how much was meant, this deponent saith not. The sincerity of the fashionable world is proverbial. Feeling herself completely restored, Lady Delaval issued cards to announce a rout, and to invite all the fashion and folly she could muster on the occasion, intending, if possible, to outvie her most splendid acquaintances in the rank and number of her visitors. The evening arrived ; the company assembled ; her ladyship was observed to be animated with an unusual flow of spirits. Her eyes beamed with pride and satisfaction as she glided through the rooms, and welcomed with smiles and compliments the almost countless throng. But in the moment of highest exhilaration, she suddenly fainted—and expired. This dreadful event spread dismay through the whole assembly of triflers—some screamed, others instantly ordered their carriages, and, in less than half an hour, the spacious apartments so brilliantly illuminated, and which had been crowded to excess, became void as the desert, and silent

as the mausoleum of the dead. Indeed, the whole house was soon abandoned to the rapacious cormorants who hunt for death as their prey.

This unlooked-for intrusion of the king of terrors, where he was so little desired, produced no lasting impression on those who had witnessed it. It furnished the chit-chat of the morning calls of the ensuing day. The phrases, " Good God !" and " Gracious Heavens !" were profanely repeated in a thousand variety of tones. Before the evening the circumstance was forgotten, and the ball at Lady Prescott's was numerously attended by the very individuals who screamed, fainted, and acted the farce of grief before the afflicted family of the Delavals on the preceding night.

This appalling catastrophe gave an additional shock to the already perturbed mind of Louisa. The death of a parent must for a moment, at least, arrest the most thoughtless ; it must excite even in the trifler mournful reflections on the uncertainty of life. Miss Delaval had long suspected that all was vanity ; she had also felt vexation of spirit ; but now the world appeared dis-

robed of its fallacious beauty ; it yawned under her feet, the grave of every hope, and every joy. Her bereaved heart rejected consolation. In vain did pleasure woo her to its circle ; vain were the well meant efforts of mistaken friends to divert and relieve her mind. They spread before her the fascinations of those amusements which, in other instances, had been known to cheat the sufferer of his woe ; but on her they produced an opposite effect. There is a state of mental gloom, to which

“ Life’s gayest scenes speak man’s mortality,
Tho’ in a style more florid, full as plain
As mausoleums, pyramids, and tombs.”

In spite of herself, Louisa imagined that death lurked in every scene. Frequently she thought of something after death ; but it was indistinct and formless. She knew nothing of “ a hope *full* of immortality.” She *presumed* that all would be well, and there the matter ended. Her father observing her disquietude, became seriously alarmed for her health ; and attributing her unusual sedateness and aversion to company to the melancholy event of her mother’s death, he

resolved to accompany her to a watering place, hoping that change of scene might recruit her spirits, and heal the anguish which so visibly preyed upon her loveliness. Louisa was glad to seek in solitude, and the charms of nature, that repose which she had in vain endeavoured to procure in the world. She took an affectionate leave of Emily, her only friend, and accompanied her father to the sea coast.

C H A P. III.

“ A mind unnerved or indisposed to bear
The weight of subjects worthiest of her care ;
Whatever hopes a change of scene inspires,
Must change her nature, or in vain retires.”

Cowper.

FROM the remarks which our narrative has thus far elicited, let none imagine that the faithful biographer of Miss Delaval is one who, with plebeian rudeness, is determined to attack “ the Corinthian capitals ” of polished society, and to level in the dust that light and elegant structure of gaiety and politeness which is the ornament and the charm of the civilised world. Against such a design indeed he needs enter no protest ; no censure is here passed on the great, the rich, and the noble as such, nor upon the manners and accomplishments, which reflect lustre upon the elevated stations which Providence has destined them to fill. In a country where wealth is every day changing

its masters, and the nobodies of yesterday become the upstart lordlings of to-day ; where the educated and illustrious are so constantly annoyed by well-fed ignorance, and purse proud insolence ; where all the consequence of rank is assumed without the smallest portion of its urbanity, by those who every moment betray to others the baseness of their origin, while they

“ Forget the dunghill where they grew,
And think themselves the Lord knows who :”

He must be a Goth or a Vandal who would attempt to confound the distinction between the well-bred gentleman and the overgrown dealer in the articles which furnish his table and his cellar—between the lady of birth and family, and the malapert and affected descendant of her grandmother’s waiting-woman. But when the higher orders enter into a tacit compact, to exclude from their circles the dignity of intellect and the spirit of piety ; when their whole time is wasted in frivolous amusements, and in those pursuits which render their example useless, if not pernicious ; that writer ought not to be deemed the enemy of their rank or privilege,

who, in the language of mild expostulation, presumes to become the censor of their vices, and the satirist of their follies; who unveils their real character with the benevolent design of exciting them to reflection and amendment. It is possible to possess, in all its irresistible attraction, “the unbought grace of life,” and yet to be rational and devoted candidates for immortality.

The place chosen by Sir George Delaval, as a summer’s retreat, was a delightful spot:

“a little lowly hermitage it was,
Down in a dale.”

It was situated on the banks of the Medina, in a nook which secluded it from observation, except from the water. Trees, then in all the verdure of spring, shaded it from the glare of the noon-day sun. The windows commanded a bird’s-eye view of the harbour of Cowes, and all the picturesque and enchanting scenery of its eastern shore. It was sufficiently distant from the town, to preserve the charm of silent solitude. No human voice was heard, except when in the stillness of the night, the hoarse watch-word of the centinel stationed in the convict ship

at the mouth of the river, murmured through the glen. On the first evening of her arrival, Louisa, in wandering around her cottage, felt a kind of ecstasy. The still small voice of nature spoke to her heart, and she wept she knew not why. It had been a very sultry day, but a light evening breeze rendered the air cool. It was fresh without chillness, and inspired a sensation of deliciousness which words cannot describe. To the eye all was beauty. The setting sun had tinged the clouds with a crimson hue, which was again reflected by the water, and invested with its glory the trees of the distant copse. The sweetest nightingales were incessantly on either side of the river, answering each other's songs. Never to the enamoured ear of Louisa did sounds convey so heartfelt a joy. For dispirited and sad as she was, she still retained

“ A young fancy, which would convert the sound
Of common breath to something exquisite,
When evening silence, and the trees were round her.”

In this charming retreat Miss Delaval indulged a pleasing confidence that she should lose her mental distress, and recruit her

wasting strength. When in the world, she imagined that the cause of her unhappiness was not in herself, but in her condition ; she therefore at once concluded, that retirement would bestow upon her tranquillity and peace. But after the first delightful emotions, which rural scenery cannot fail to excite in one who had been long a stranger to its influence had subsided ; she felt again the gnawing anguish of a mind that preyed upon itself. Quietness soothed her melancholy, but did not invigorate her heart. It forced upon her reflection ; but the past had nothing to inspire her with satisfaction, and of the future she was totally ignorant. She sought employment and solace in reading, and once or twice made an effort to express her sentiments in verse. But her's was not the usual theme on which young ladies of her age invoke the muse. She was not in love, and therefore neither whined nor wept in the edifying strains of damsels, who would feign persuade us that their tender hearts must break, because Lothario frowns, or Edwin is inconstant.

The following lines bear the date of the period, when Louisa had occupied the re-

tired scene which we have described, but little more than a fortnight :

Sweet is the radiant blush of early morn,
And soft the crystal drops of glittering dew ;
Mild the young fragrance of the milk-white thorn,
And fair the glow which paints the violet blue.

Calm is the sweet, the tranquil hour of eve,
And fair the sparkling gems that gild the night ;
Soft is the tint the murmuring waves receive,
From the faint beams of Luna's silvery light.

But 'tis not in the radiant morning's hue
To chace away the mental shades that roll,
Nor can the early drops of balmy dew
Distil sweet peace into the wounded soul.

In vain the violet spreads her leaves so fair,
In vain the sweetly scented hawthorn blows ;
If sadly nursed, with many a bitter tear
The thorn of sorrow in the bosom grows.

When the last beam fades slowly from the west,
And all the starry host of heaven arise,
The child of anguish tastes not nature's rest—
Each zephyr seems an echo to her sighs.

I guess the cause that bids the silent tear
Steal gently trembling down her pallid cheek,
And in that bursting sigh did fancy hear
The language which a sigh alone can speak.

It seemed to whisper, " Tho' each beauty fades,
" Another morning shall *its* charms restore ;
" But, ah! my Sun has sunk in darkest shades,
" To rise and purple Eastern skies no more.

In vain for her, the waves of ocean roll,
In vain for her the silvery moon-beams play ;
For ruder billows overwhelm her soul,
Without one gleam of hope's celestial ray.

No outward scene can make the mourner blest,
Or cause the sun of heavenly peace to shine ;
Some corresponding charm *within* the breast
Must gently wake the sympathy divine.

The pensiveness breathed in these stanzas acquired increasing influence every day, interrupted occasionally by a letter from Emily, and the employment of answering what had been thus received. This correspondence, as it will disclose the different characters of the writers, may not be uninteresting :

LOUISA TO EMILY.

“ I almost envy you, my thoughtless Emily, the happiness which is ever dimpling your cheeks and illuminating your countenance with perpetual smiles. I would give the world for that power by which you lay every thing under contribution to your wishes ; and for that *nonchalance* with which you allow yourself to be cheated into pleasure. I am so much a fool, I break every toy that should

amuse me to see what it contains. If Sir Charles bows to me, and says a thousand fine things, I begin to dissect his head ; and, when he proffers love, I am provoked to find that my sighing Strephon is without a heart. A ball-room has its charms, and I love to shine ; but then I cannot bear to think at how small a price I purchase admiration ; and when I imagine I have deserved it, I begin to estimate this admiration itself, and find it lighter than vanity. When I go to the play, if I am interested, I am laughed at ; and if I am perfectly indifferent to what is passing on the stage, I am doomed to listen to unmeaning compliments and insipid nonsense from the coxcombs around me ; yet I really make an effort to do these things with a grace, and it would all be well could I chace away the intruding phantom—thought, had I not the strange propensity to believe that I am answering no one important purpose for which I conceive my Creator blessed me with existence. Oh ! I could satirise and scourge the follies of the world ! I sometimes feel the curling smile of bitter irony disfiguring my most enchanting face, as the boobies call it ; but when I would turn

the jest upon a fellow trifler, conscience raises her faithful mirror, and I stand self-convicted and reproved. In thus opening my heart, I have exposed myself, Emily, to your playful raillery ; but to this I feel not the smallest objection. Perhaps for the moment I shall laugh with you—
“ A merry heart doeth good like a medicine ;”
but when I shall obtain this panacea, it is not in my power to imagine. Sir George has chosen a retreat which seems like fairy land. This beautiful island is, indeed, the garden of England. Yesterday I beheld a lovely scene. As we were ascending an adjoining hill, which commands a view of Whippingham spire, peeping above the trees, and the elegant *chateaux* and grounds which render the eastern Cowes one of the most cultivated and pleasant spots upon earth ; we were suddenly surprised by the gathering of dark clouds immediately around us, and the springing up of violent gusts of wind. While the servants were endeavouring to close the carriage, the rain descended in torrents, and we expected nothing less than a raging and pitiless tempest ; but scarcely had this thought

glanced through the mind ere the scene was completely changed. The storm, apparently in pursuit of some fleet and flying enemy, merely frowned and threatened as it hastened from us to pour its fury on the devoted victim ! But the glorious sun, as if determined to avenge the insult, shone forth in all his brightness ; and as we turned to welcome him with smiles of gratitude, a spectacle, to me altogether new and delightful, presented itself. The trees on the rising shore were invested with all the lovely variegated tints of the rainbow, “ turning their leafy umbrage into a substance glorious as its own ;” as if Iris had descended to the emerald cavern of the naiads of the stream, and had cast her mantle on the shore to await her return : or you might have imagined that Nature determined to keep a holiday in this her favourite isle, had hung the woods with garlands, adorned with every flower of every hue from her exhaustless treasury of beauty. In short, your fancy may imagine what you will, but you will never, never be able to realise the lovely and enchanting vision ; but that also is no more : like many day dreams, which were quite as

charming, it is fled. Oh! what a vain pageant is human life—

“What is this passing scene?”

A peevish April day,

A little sun, a little rain,

And then night sweeps along the plain,

And all things fade away.

Farewell, my dear Emily, you need not envy; perhaps you will sympathise with your unhappy friend

L. D.”

EMILY TO LOUISA.

“Very pretty notions, truly, for a girl of twenty; that old prude, your venerable aunt, could not have diverted me more. What strange spirit of vapourish melancholy, my dear Louisa, dictated your last letter? I am ready to say with Hamlet—

“Get thee to a nunnery.”

When, my charming friend, do you take the veil? Let me see—

“In these deep solitudes and awful cells.”

Admirable! so the amiable Louisa Delaval, the mirror of fashion, the admiration

of the other sex, and the envy of her own, begins to moralise—to weep, and to talk of being unhappy ! This all comes of being romantic : I always thought you had a spice of this in your composition, and have lamented its influence over you. It is very well to seem to be romantic and sentimental, and all that sort of thing, when it is the mode, and Lord Byron's poetry has certainly of late brought it into fashion ; but to be really romantic, to live in the poet's world, and to be the subject of deep and powerful feelings which none of the million can understand, and with which they cannot sympathise, is to be a grim solitaire, when all around us is social gaiety and joy. I would rather dwell in a fool's paradise, and laugh away my days of idleness with the daughters of vanity, than mope and moralise, and cry and look sublime with those very *sombre*, magnificent, and heroic personages the ladies of romance. Do not you, my dear Louisa, suffer yourself any longer to be entranced by these wizards, the mighty masters of song : they may make fools of their readers ; but they are far enough from being duped themselves by the creations of their fancy. There is your favourite

Byron, for instance ; do you think that he is troubled with any of the sensibilities and tendernesses of human nature ; that he possesses any of that ennobling generosity which delights in the happiness of others, and which would spend its last energies in alleviating their wretchedness ? no ; he is radically and totally selfish, and we may almost say of him, what has been recently said of the second Charles, “ that a heart was forgotten in his anatomy.” If he were not a stranger to the true natural touch, if apathetic vanity had not chilled and frozen all the delicate sympathies of humanity within him ; would he so constantly force upon mankind his impious creed, his refined profligacy, his cruel and execrable taunts on a woman, whose only fault was identifying the poet with the man ; who sinned but once, but, ah ! how fatally, in paying that homage to genius which was due only to virtue ? How mean are his attempts to awaken sympathy for himself at the expense of a wife whom he first rendered desolate, and whom he has ever since assailed with the weapons of irony and ridicule ; holding her up in exquisite and unrivalled poetry to public scorn and con-

tempt ! In perfect harmony with these sentiments, are the following lines which I met with the other day. I will make no apology for inserting them, and shall only premise that they are misnamed a

S O N N E T.

BYRON ! of all mankind the foe,
Why pour in heedless ears thy woe ?
The wretched mourn their own sad lot,
The grave, the gay, regard thee not ;
All—all are ruled by selfish cares,
Each busied in his own affairs ;
Yet could they sigh o'er others grief,
And yield to sorrow sweet relief,
In them,—thy wayward fancied dole,
Can wake no tenderness of soul ;
Then why in pensive sadness wail,
Why breathe thy strange obtrusive tale ?
All human sympathies in thee are dead,
And for the misanthrope, no human tears are shed.

I look back amazed at what I have written, and begin to feel that moralizing is infectious. If you tell me that I have mistaken your case, that you are not at all romantic, and that I might have spared my tirade against your noble oracle, why then you drive me per force to another conjecture. Louisa, ah ! Louisa—you are certainly in

love ; pray who is the tender swain ? But “ she never told her love.” Prithee do not sit any longer like “ patience on a monument ;” escape from solitude, it will only nourish your melancholy ; if necessary, escape from yourself ; a gay and laughing world is ready to receive you with a lively welcome ; and if your beautiful island, with its rainbows and breezes, cannot impart to your cheeks the roses of York and Lancaster—why, you can get them, you know, at a moderate price from the perfumers in Bond-street. In a few weeks we shall be off to Cheltenham, or Brighton. Glens and cottages will not suit us. I must flow and ebb with the tide of fashion. The stagnant pool of retirement would infect me with a disease a thousand times more to be dreaded than a tertian ague. But I am interrupted—the carriage waits—I have a hundred calls to make, and as many compliments to pay, and beginning them with my best compliments to Sir George—and concluding this letter with my sincerest regards to you, I am, my dearest Louisa, your ever devoted

EMILY.”

C H A P. IV.

“ I have of late (but wherefore I know not) lost all my mirth —Indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a steril promontory ; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o’er hanging firmament, this majestic roof, fretted with golden fires, why it appears no other to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours.”—*Shakspeare*.

LOUISA TO EMILY.

“ I SEEM, my dear Emily, to be already in a nunnery, except that I tell no beads, and repeat no Ave-Maria’s. I have not to encounter the grave austerities of a Lady Abbess, nor am I troubled with the gloating and grimace of holy monks and friars ; neither am I imprisoned within frowning and impassable walls, nor do I look through grated windows, and sigh in vain for freedom. But I am as gloomy and wretched as any of the hapless sisterhood ; and though

I have not renounced the world, the world has renounced me ; at least, I do not think that I can ever delight in it again. It is not merely insipid, it is distasteful, and almost nauseating. Young as I am, I have exhausted the chalice of human pleasure. I have run the giddy round, and tired and satiated, I sit down sick at heart. I have experienced what the world is, and in this retirement, favourable to reflection, have been able to delineate its character, and to estimate its worth. What can be more wretched than a woman of fashion, obeying the ever-varying and yet monotonous dictates of her capricious deity ? Let me fill up for your instruction, my Emily, only one week of her dissipated career. Each morning is spent, either in the bosom of vacancy at home, attentively enumerating the dull and heavy hours that delay the frivolous scene, which at midnight her heart pants to realize ; or in sauntering, or rolling through the public streets without an object, but to catch the attention of the equally idle of the other sex, or excite the envy of her own. When the wished-for moment arrives, she sallies forth to the

revel or empty pageantry of the night, regardless of the repose which her constitution, and the wants of nature imperiously demand; and often pushing her furious avidity for dissipation into the blushing beams of a returning sun, miserable should chance or indisposition prevent her, in a single instance, from being surrounded abroad, or at home, by a circle of this splendid wretchedness: a stranger in her family; her children, if children she has any, committed to the mercy, the inattention, the example of menials; without the benefit of a mother's tenderness, instruction, and care; and this blessed week, which is the history of every other, only redeemed by occasionally on a Sunday morning offering to Almighty God the wanderings of a mind stupified and corrupted by the never-ending worship of the world. And, oh! what is this world? What is its genuine character? Is it not to neglect occupations the most sacred and important; to run indiscreetly and without choice into every circle that will admit us; to live only in the confusion of night and day, amidst laborious amusements that always terminate in disgust; to

strive who shall outdo the other in excessive and luxurious entertainments ; to exhibit with study and affectation brilliant and expensive baubles on the person, and the person without attire ; to relish the unintelligible jargon of mixed and tumultuous assemblies ; to endeavour in all conversations, rather to shine than to instruct ; to season it high with the salt of sarcasm, or slander ; delicately and artificially to envelope the poison of impurity and corruption ; to render play an occupation and a traffic, a blind ungovernable passion, that fills the soul with base and malignant affections, the selfishness of avarice, the bitterness of envy, the rage that boils at loss and disappointment ; nightly to grope for an object that engrosses every reflection of the mind, and every desire of the heart ; that every instant under the capricious empire of chance, produces miserable shiftings of ecstasy and pain ; and under the law of polite manners, commands the torment of outward ease and countenance serene, when the storm is most violent and afflicting within ? This is the world—the world in which we have lived, my Emily ; the only

scene of our being and pursuits ; the prescribed limits in which we have been taught to seek our happiness. Thank heaven, for a little interval at least, I have escaped. Every thing around me is charming :

—————“ Nature here,
Wantons as in her prime, and plays at will,
Her virgin fancies.”

We have spent the last few days at Shanklin and Steephill,—yet, in Paradise I am unhappy. The genius of the place befriends me not, and the gloom of my mind gives a sombre cast to the most brilliant prospects, and covers with a sickly hue the beauties of summer. I begin to suspect the disease to be in myself, and that it is rather of a moral, than of a physical nature. Methinks I should feel as one new made, could I look back with pleasure, and retrace the events of my little history with satisfaction. My infant heart danced with joy, when my dear departed mother painted to my view the pleasures which awaited me, when I should dazzle the world with my beauty ; but, oh, it was all delusion ! A life of fashion is delightful while it is novel,

and when enjoyed by a thoughtless girl ; but reflection is the fell magician, who, with a single stroke of his wand, reduces the enchanting scenery to a wide, dreary waste ; and yet with a mind prone to reflection, I am doomed to be the child and the sport of folly. A thousand times since I have been in the country, have I wished for the sweet simplicity and rural innocence of the cottage maid. And as I love poetry, who knows but after all I may be metamorphosed from the fine lady to the shepherdess with her crook to chaunt in Lydian measures the praises of a country life ; but through whatever variety of untried being I am doomed to pass, my dear Emily, believe me to be your ever affectionate

LOUISA.

EMILY TO LOUISA.

“ My dear Louisa ;

You talk of a metamorphosis,—a thought just occurs to me ; and if you please you can avail yourself of it for your benefit, and the edification of such sinners as I am. *Certes*, you preach almost as well as the

good Bishop of Gloucester; and as you would no doubt attract a crowd of fashionables to hear you, what think you of taking orders? "The cloak of inky black would denote you truly:" the only objection to this project is your sex; but I have seen many an old woman in lawn sleeves, and I see no reason why a young one may not take the gown. On second thoughts, however, I am afraid you would be too pious and methodistical; yet, if you will not do for the establishment, with a very little initiation, you may start from all the vanities of this wicked world an inspired luminary of the new secession of young ladies, who have left the ball-room for the conventicle; and whose pretty sparkling eyes, dimpled cheeks, and ruby lips, fascinate the listening puritanic throng, which their novel opinions, and still more novel practice, have drawn around them. Had you not better join this coterie of lovely Theologians? I promise you I will become your attentive auditor, and be demure if I can, while you unfold the secret book of fate, and tell us how a God of mercy reprobated from all eternity, unnumbered millions of his wretched creatures.

The daughter of Lord S—— has been doing all this with the most becoming fervour and propriety in the neighbourhood of E——, and I assure you, she is greatly admired. But, to be serious, where is your former sprightliness ? I fear, from the strain of your letter, you will bury yourself alive ; you almost unfitted me for the engagements of the last evening. I played horridly, and to tell you the truth, lost a very considerable sum. I shall put it to your account, for I was thinking of you instead of the game. The Countess of D—— quite disconcerted me by inquiring after you. Sir Charles Clermont, I verily believe, were it possible for him to die of love, would languish for you, and go off in high style. But, alas ! the age of chivalry is gone, and that of calculators and arithmeticians has succeeded it. I had half a mind to let your adorer know what strange vagaries infect your brain, but I was afraid some of the company would faint. We have a new face added to our circle. The men say the creature is handsome. She is very well, but intolerably affected. That divinity of a beau, Captain Dormer, left my chair as soon as she entered last evening ;

but I am determined to mortify him. Do, my dear, contrive to meet us as soon as possible ; I have a thousand things to tell you. Since your departure, we have lost a brilliant of the purest water,—so say the lords of the creation, who well understand how to appreciate jewels and precious stones,—and do you know I hear it all without envy. In your next, do write a little “like folks of this world.” Adieu.

EMILY.”

LOUISA TO EMILY.

“I know not, my dear Emily, how sufficiently to admire your patience. You receive, with all the playfulness of good humour, the dull sermon-like letters of your gloomy friend. Writing to you is the greatest relief to my distressed mind, and I sincerely wish that I could transfer into my epistles a little of your gaiety. But there is scarcely a moment of my life in which I do not feel mortification. I cannot,—and indeed I have seriously made the attempt,—I cannot rank myself among the serene and thoughtless mortals that are content with the

same vanities from January to December, without the least variety, or even forming a wish for more reasonable and exalted pursuits. I have, it is true, now fled from scenes

“ Where languor loads the day, excess the night.”

But I know not that I have made a profitable exchange; I am equally unfit for retirement and the world. In the bustle of life, I wanted motives for action: in solitude, I am destitute of materials for thinking. A rational and immortal nature craves the aliment that will at once invigorate and satisfy it. Depend upon it, the state of my mind is not, as you playfully imagine, the result of romance or of love. The noble poet you so severely and so oddly censure, and whose unrivalled genius it would betray a total want of intellect and taste not to admire, has neither duped my understanding nor perverted my heart. But he has eloquently and powerfully described those feelings of utter and hopeless wretchedness which never fail to agonise the soul, when vanity throws off her disguise and becomes vexation of spirit. Be assured that the poet describes every votary of the world when he

talks of the fulness of satiety ; and tells us, that

“ With pleasure drugg’d, he almost longed for woe,
And e’en for change of scene would seek the shades below.”

The same energy and intensity of feeling which he ascribes to his hero, can belong, indeed, only to minds of a superior order. But even the frivolous and the imbecile, who are bounded by the circle of fashionable pleasures and pursuits, if they think at all, must be painfully conscious that existence and disappointment are coeval and inseparable, and must be almost prepared to admit the melancholy conclusion which this said noble author has too happily expressed in the following stanza :

“ Count o’er the joys thine hours have seen,
Count o’er thy days from anguish free,
And know whatever thou hast been,
’Tis something better not to be.”

I have lately indulged my imagination by exhausting the circulating library of the neighbouring town. Among a vast quantity of wretched trash, I have found some of the productions of genius ; but the genius of romance and fiction seems to be only an incarnation of the spirit of evil. It

is certain that its influence on the mind is most unfavourable to correct thinking and vigorous acting. It is the opiate of the soul which gently conveys it to the dreaming world, where it is familiar only with the pleasures and the pains of sleep. Indeed I sometimes think that professed and devoted novel-readers are a species of sleep-walkers upon the earth ; their eyes are closed against every thing that is passing in the world around them, and every moment they tread on precipices, unconscious of their danger, or pursue delusive phantoms which they mistake for glorious realities. This, to be sure, is an enviable state of mind could we only command its continuance, and secure ourselves against the innumerable perils and calamities to which it necessarily exposes us ; but my heart rejects the vain illusion. It seems to be my unhappy fate to detect all the fallacies which have so much power over others. The world of fashion and the world of fancy, are alike treacherous : in both I have confided only to be deceived ; like juggling fiends, they

“ Keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope.”

Whatever gives the imagination the ascendancy over the understanding and the judgment, must be injurious to happiness. The fictitious kind of life exhibited in novels, is so unlike this world of dull reality, that if we suffer ourselves to be captivated by its illusions, it must equally unfit us for the duties and the pleasures of existence. The flowers, and the verdure, and the sunlight in the fields of fancy, are all too beautiful, fresh, and vivid, not to make every thing around us insipid and worthless. And should the imagination be chiefly excited by scenes of gloom and melancholy, how distressing must be its influence in aggravating the ills which are inseparable from the present state. Every calamity is made doubly formidable, and the cup of sorrow is overcharged with bitterness. Thus, my Emily, have I sufficiently proved to you, that I am far enough from being romantic. Did this form any very striking part of my intellectual character, I should be its dupe, and not its censor; yet I love to read a well-written novel : when I meet with works of this description, I feel as anxious to get through them as those to whose existence they are a necessary aliment ; and could

I incessantly employ myself with them, I might then charm away the evil spirit ; but as it is, these fascinating volumes only leave me more susceptible of its return, and less able to resist its influence. But enough of romance, of fiction, and wretchedness ; the best thing in human life is friendship. Sympathy mitigates, if it does not remove sorrow, and this alleviation I feel whenever I approach my dearest Emily."

C H A P. V.

“Natura beatiss
Omnibus esse dedit, si quis cognoverit uti.”—*Claudian*.

“Wherein lies happiness? In that which beck
Our ready minds to fellowship divine,
A fellowship with essence ; till we shine,
Full alchemiz’d, and free of space.”—*Keats*.

LOUISA TO EMILY.

“SINCE my residence in the country, my letters to you, my dear Emily, have chiefly turned upon the state of my own mind. I have had little inclination to look around me, or to make any new acquaintance ; but I have lately met with a lady of exquisite accomplishments, of singular mental endowments, and who appears to me the strangest and yet the happiest creature in the world. Our first meeting was at the bath, where most of the company saunter away the morning. We chatted for a few minutes on the general topics of the day, and parted without any expectation of being more inti-

mately acquainted ; but the other evening, as I was taking a ramble among the rocks, I overtook the same lady ; she was reading in an elegant volume, which, at my approach, she instantly closed. Our conversation naturally turned on the serenity of the evening. My companion seemed to be an enthusiastic admirer of nature. She descanted with taste and elegance on every striking object which was presented to our view. But while rapture beamed in her eye, as she pointed my attention to whatever was lovely in the beautiful scenery around us, she exclaimed, “ I have no doubt that even this paradise will be visited by many to whom verdant shades, fragrant breezes, and all ‘ the pomp ‘ and garniture of fields,’ will possess no charms. The giddy sons and daughters of fashion will wander here, and to them this delightful scene will be a blank ; retirement suits not the vacant mind, and to the votaries of artificial pleasure, the simple beauties of nature will be insipid ; it is only through the heart, which contains within itself resources of enjoyment, that

“ Woods, hills and vallies diffuse
A lasting, a sacred delight.”

“ It is indeed to be lamented,” I replied, “ that there are so many rational creatures who are wretched every where, who quit the country for the town, and the town for the country with the same success, and who seem to be ingenious in nothing but the art of self-tormenting.” “ It is lamentable,” said my companion, with unusual energy, “ and yet these wretched beings might be happy.” When she uttered this last sentence, I am sure my countenance betrayed the emotions I felt. “ You seem, my dear Madam,” I answered, concealing as well as I could my embarrassment, “ to enjoy a much greater portion of happiness than commonly falls to the lot of poor bewildered mortals. I confess to you that I am one of those who can contemplate even a scene like this without being happy : yet I admire it ; I have a taste for its beauties ; but unless I could give mind and intelligence to these inanimate lovely forms, they will not, cannot, please me long. I want,—call it poetry or what you will,—that ineffable, exquisite something, by which I may consciously become a ‘ portion of that around ‘ me.’ I cannot say that ‘ to me high moun-

tains are a feeling.' I am yet a stranger to that which has been elegantly described as

“ ——— a tone,

The soul and source of music which makes known
Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm,
Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,
Binding all things with beauty.”

I often seem to stand alone in a desolate world—beautiful indeed, but desolate—for I hold with it no communion. It does not convey my spirit to Heaven ; and, if it did, I know nothing of that mysterious principle,—that love to the Divine Being which would make me happy, while conscious of his presence.” Oh, Emily ! you should have seen the countenance of my affectionate companion, when, with indescribable pity and tenderness, she gently took advantage of this my indiscreet confession to descant on the charms of divine philosophy—“ That very want, my dear young friend, of which you complain,” she observed, “ the state of my mind supplies. When walking in the lonely glen, when reclining on the sea-beaten rock, and listening to the dashing of the waves, I feel the pervading presence of the infinite spirit. Without this, even Elysium

itself would be to me a dreary wilderness. I love to trace the hand of Deity in all the rich variety of his innumerable and glorious works. I am not any more than you are, the idolater of nature ; I have no sympathy with that merely poetic or rather atheistic feeling which calls up ‘ the spirit of each spot,’ which seems to impart itself to inanimate objects, and which exclaims—

“ Are not the mountains, waves, and skies a part
Of me and of my soul, and I of them ? ”

I worship God alone. To me what is heathenishly called nature, but reveals his being, his presence, and his love ? I hear him in the thunder ; he whispers in the breeze : in the rustling of the leaf, he passes by me ; I see him in every form : he meets my eye wherever it rests : he is in every hue of every flower. The sublime is but an overpowering glimpse of his majesty ; the beautiful, but a fine and exquisite trait of him, ‘ the first fair, and the first good.’ While I adore the pure spirituality of his essence, which exalts and glorifies all his perfections, without which, indeed, infinitude could not appertain to his being, to me the

universe is his temple, and every object in that vast fabric is an altar, on which I endeavour to present the offering of a devout and grateful heart. I consider all that is sensible around me as a type of something spiritual. When Spring decorates the earth, enamels my path with flowers, and decks the forest with her loveliest verdure, imagination transports me to the regions of immortality. I think of the ever-blooming fields of Paradise, and of those undecaying trees, whose foliage is never embrowned with the melancholy tints of Autumn. Subject to infirmity, I must ere long be borne to the house appointed for all living. But thus I descend with a calm and holy pleasure. I could tell you much ; but see, the shadows of evening warn us to depart ; we shall meet again, and, if the theme be not disagreeable, we will renew it." Believe me, Emily, I quitted this interesting woman with wonder and regret. I begin even now to feel how lovely goodness is. I see that I have hitherto neglected the friendship of the only being who can make me happy.

Adieu."

LOUISA TO EMILY.

“ Yesterday, my dear Emily, I was honoured with a visit from Mrs. Wilmington, the lady whose conversation the other evening on the beach so much interested me. She appears to be about forty years of age, and must have been in youth eminently beautiful. She possesses all the elegance of manners which distinguishes the best company ; yet, strange as it may appear, she never figured in the gay circles ; nor has disappointments or age driven her from the pursuits of pleasure. She is to me an extraordinary woman ; her mind is highly cultivated, yet is she no *bas bleu*, nor is she at all a recluse. She possesses every thing that would render her a charming woman of fashion, and has a fortune that would enable her to appear with consequence. I first thought that probably she was a little cynical, and that she refused to share in the gaities and dissipation of life, that she might gratify her spleen in making them a subject of railery and censure. But this is not the case ; she suffers the world to enjoy what are called

its pleasures ; she only prefers her own. The intercourse of a few hours has enabled me to form these ideas of the character of my new acquaintance. You will, I doubt not, conclude, that she is a curious mortal, and wonder how I can waste my time with such a quizzical being ; but in the distressed state of mind in which she found me, she seems to be a guardian angel sent to cheer and revive my drooping spirits. Cheerfulness is her inseparable companion. And what may appear strange, she professes to derive her happiness from religion. She assures me, that the want of this is the cause of the greater part of that chagrin and disappointment, which so often distracts the votaries of pleasure. She insists upon it, that in a great multitude of cases, what are called nervous disorders, originate in the conscience ; that they are rather moral than physical ; and she pities those who are incessantly searching after happiness where it never can be found. The novelty of her assertions at first startled, but their reasonableness half convinced me. It seems probable, that creatures endowed with intelligence, who feel within them a

conscious principle which allies them to Deity, and which is immortal,—it seems probable, that such creatures ought to cultivate the best part of their nature, and prepare to enjoy the noblest portion of their existence. When Mrs. Wilmington quitted me, I began to ruminate on this subject, and felt more than half persuaded to try whether religion will make me as happy as she is. I have accordingly read my Prayer-book, I hope, with devotion ; I intend to be regular at church. I will endeavour at least to deserve happiness, and to make my Creator propitious to me. By this means I hope to dispel the gloom which has overspread my mind, and to return to my Emily and to the world with cheerfulness, that I may pursue those pleasures only in fashionable life, which are compatible with my new resolutions. I expect to be rallied by you on my strange plan ; but is not “ happiness our beings end and aim ;” and is it not at least as reasonable for me to court it in an untried path, as still to run round in the same circle which has uniformly disappointed me ? You and I, Emily, are certainly differently constituted ; you are well contented

as you are. I am the slave of *ennui*; but I now anticipate a happy change. I am sure, did you know Mrs. Wilmington you would love her, at least you would confess that the world can boast very few women so elegantly agreeable and charmingly intelligent.

“ LOUISA.”

EMILY TO LOUISA.

“ Wonders will never cease ! My sweet religious friend, I hope with your pious resolves you will not be seized with a passion for reforming your acquaintances ; and pray how long is this religious fit to continue ? I imagine, and I am sure I hope, that you will be soon tired of it. Prayers may be a sovereign remedy to cure some people of the spleen, but they always give me the vapours. I should absolutely die, were I condemned to read the Prayer-book for an hour ! Mercy on us, what have you and I to do with religion ? A little of it on a sick bed is very well, and when we become grand-mothers we may read the week’s preparation and take the sacrament. But, oh dear, my head turns

giddy at the thought ! Do you think, my charming Louisa, we shall ever look like our grand-mothers ? There is nothing I dread so much as wrinkles—I must have a peep at my glass—I hope they will never come ; however, I am well satisfied that they are far, very far yet.—Gertrude tells me I never looked so charming and every thing that is beautiful as I do now.—Ah, Louisa, she's a faithful good creature ! she says the dimple in my cheeks is absolutely killing ; and though I have seen two and twenty, I am more blooming and have more of mellow and settled beauty than Lady S——, who is just nineteen. It signifies nothing, I never can be old. I am told some people look charming at fifty, and have really been mistaken for girls in their teens : this is truly delightful ! I think I have a good wearing face, and when I smile I am irresistible. Do not, my dear Louisa, be misled by that unaccountable being you dignify with the name of friend. She may be very well as an object of curiosity ; but what have you to do with saints ?—you are already an angel,—nay, were I Sir Charles Clermont, I would swear you are a goddess. Pray does

not your new associate belong to the tribe of sentimental sermonising female authors, who lounge at Hatchard's, and talk theology with the solemn decent gentlemen in black, who spend their mornings there? She is not quite old enough to be the methodistical writer of *Cœlebs*, which was certainly composed in her dotage, and which, notwithstanding the noise it made at first, is now almost forgotten in the fashionable world. The truth is, it does not suit our meridian. I took up the last volume the other day, but I began to feel *ennui*; by the way, I never *begin* any book except a *real* novel. Give me novels, the opera, beauty and admiration, masquerades and routs, and I envy you not your books of devotion, your *tête-à-têtes* with Mrs. Wilmington, and all the dismal train of "pious orgies, decent prayers."

"EMILY."

LOUISA TO EMILY.

"My dear Emily;

Your fearful apprehensions of old age at first diverted me, but afterwards, when I laid down your letter, in spite of myself a melan-

choly train of reflections forced itself upon my mind. How strange, I could not help exclaiming, that we should anxiously strive to avoid that which is inevitable, and to which, if we live long enough, we are posting with all the rapidity of time ! I asked myself, what is there in wrinkles and old age really to be dreaded ? and I could not help concluding, that those pursuits and pleasures which vanished before the harbingers of death, must be fallacious and worthless. The evening of life, if we understood the end for which it is given, must be as interesting and beautiful as its morning. How evanescent must be the happiness which hangs only on the loveliness of youth, and the charms of beauty ! And how wretched the creature who is doomed to pass from the pleasures of a dissipated youth to the remorse of a cheerless and neglected age ! How pitiable too the object who attempts to grasp the fleeting shadow even after it is gone, who would fain persuade itself that it retains to the very last that which was scarcely worth its care, while the business and end of existence are neglected ! It was but the other day I saw the Dowager

Countess of ———, who is nearly eighty years of age, and even now the cares of the toilet are all that engross her attention ; and for your comfort, my thoughtless Emily, I assure you that by the help of *rouge* she looks as blooming as eighteen. To be sure she betrays certain indications of decrepitude when she attempts to walk ; but in her chair and at a convenient distance (*il ne faut pas regarder de trop près*) she appears a lovely creature. She was once, Emily, beautiful as you are. Flattered by her waiting woman, adored by the Dorners of the last age, the admiration of the men, and the envy of the women she fluttered and shone through her little day, and when it was past she was left without resources. Fortunately her vanity did not forsake her ; it is still her companion, and she imagines herself a beauty at four-score. If you think that, like this miserable trifler, you can thus make your understanding the dupe of your inclination, you need not be alarmed at the approach of wrinkles. To me old age appears so distant and uncertain a thing, and an early grave so much more probable, that the highest attainment for which I sigh,

is intellectual and immortal beauty. My heart sinks within me when I am forced to believe that I scarcely possess one of its features, and that I have lived so entirely in vain.

“LOUISA.”

C H A P. VI.

————— Bon Ton 's the thing.
 " Ah, I loves life, and all the joys it yields,"
 Says Madam Fussock, warm from Spital Fields.
 ————— Bon Ton 's a constant trade
 Of rout, *festino*, ball, and masquerade;
 'Tis plays and puppet shows—'tis something new,—
 'Tis losing thousands every night at *lu* !

Colman.

" WELL," said Emily, as she folded up her reply to Louisa's last letter, and the perusal of which we shall spare our readers, " friendship may do very well for those who are never *ennuied* with any thing, but I fear I shall find it very tiresome, after all, to send such long epistles, that one's fingers are cramped with writing; and to receive such never-ending answers, that one's eyes are spoiled with reading them." " No, no," she continued, " my pretty Richardson in petticoats, to play Miss Howe to your Clarissa Harlowe, is too much of a farce for

me !” But, Emily’s anger had nearly spent itself in these ebullitions, and the native tenderness of her heart was fast rising to complete the conquest of affection over selfishness, and that repugnance which gaiety always feels when brought into too near contact with seriousness, when the whole current of her feelings was suddenly averted into another channel, by the entrance of no less a personage than her own maid. Rushing into the room with all the consequence which the importance of the occasion required—“ Ma’am,” she exclaimed, “ as I’m a sinner (which by-the-by she was, and a great one), there’s Mrs. Gainham’s coach coming down the street at a full trot. You know you excused yourself going to her horrid party ; sending word you had a severe cold ; and here’s the creature actually coming to see you, as if you were very ill, to ask after your health : I’ll be bound she’s brought a coach full of flannel wrappers to tie up your poor throat outside, and pots of currant jelly of her own making, to mollify it within, Ma’am.”—“ Why,” said the startled Emily, “ do you stand prating there ; all the mischief will be done while you are talking

about it. "Run, Gertrude, run and tell her I'm not at home."—"Yes, Ma'am."—"But, Gertrude, stay; tell her I am at home, but I'm so ill I can't see any body."—"Very well, Ma'am."—"But, Gertrude,"—"Ma'am"—"You had better say I'm not at home—say I'm gone into the country for change of air—say I'm very ill—I have been ill for this week, and I shan't be well for these three weeks, nay, for aught you know, I shall never be well any more." This last decision might probably have been adopted, had it not been cut short, by the loud report of the street door knock. "There," said the disconcerted Emily, there she is, and its all your fault, waiting and gossiping so long."—"I am sure," retorted the Abigail, "it's no fault of mine; I only waited, Ma'am, to know what was to be your pleasure, which I could not guess, and you could not tell!" "Run," ejaculated Emily, "meet John before he reaches the door, and desire him to say 'not at home.'" The waiting woman departed to bid her fellow servitor repeat the oft-told lie which folly first invented, and which the "tyrant custom" has almost passed into a law. Such were the final orders;—

orders however, which a glance from the window induced Emily in a moment to revoke. The dreaded visitor had made her way into the hall. To force her to retreat was impossible, the footman not having received his instructions in sufficient time.

Mrs. Gainham, a vulgar ill-bred woman of fashion (for since her widowhood she had abandoned the city for Portman-square, and on the score of her wealth and her disposition for shewy and ill-judged extravagance, was admitted into the best company), had obtruded herself upon Emily. They had met at several parties, but their acquaintance properly commenced at a sale of a nobleman's library, where Emily found herself seated next to this opulent city dame. She was not a little amused by the ridiculous observations of her companion ; and had any of the wits of her acquaintance been present, she would have indulged that satirical vein which she so well knew how to employ to the best advantage. But, almost alone and unobserved, the kindness of her nature prevailed over this less amiable trait of her character, and she delicately interposed more than once to protect Mrs. Gainham from being

duped by the eloquence and address of the auctioneer. Ignorance, impertinence, and folly are never less at home than in a library and at a mart of books; here a purchaser not only disposes of his money, but unconsciously betrays the strength or weakness of his mind, the nature of its cultivation, and the absence or otherwise of judgment and taste.

Poor Mrs. Gainham on the present occasion had certainly wandered out of her sphere. She had fixed her heart upon a set of tracts of all dates, on the Popish controversy (evidently vamped up for the sale), because the auctioneer had assured her the binding was novel and *unique*, and that if she bought them, she would possess a series of volumes which, for splendor of appearance, were not to be matched in London. These, at Emily's suggestion, she reluctantly consented to forego. They were knocked down to the tutor of a young Roman Catholic nobleman, at less than the cost of the binding. A number of splendid, though antiquated volumes—Travels of the Jesuits in China,—she could not, however, agree to relinquish;—they bore with them an attraction

which all the persuasion of Emily could not overcome. The plates, which were of a gaudy description, charmed her at once, and “through the eye subdued the heart.” She must have them; she said “the *pictures* were so beautiful, just the very thing for *rainy weather*; besides they were so *helegant* and in such good taste—the very *moral* of the Pavilion at Brighton.”—Observations quite as profound and interesting this voluble piece of vulgarity continued to utter, to the no small astonishment of all who heard her. Emily, however, sometimes with difficulty suppressing a smile, contrived to extricate her from several dilemmas into which her palpable ignorance had betrayed her; and she did it with so much address, that Mrs. Gainham was evidently charmed with her condescending attentions. The close of the auction compelled the company to retire; but as they separated, Emily was loaded with fulsome compliments by her companion, who expressed the greatest anxiety to rank her among her friends and visitors. “She had three daughters,” she said, “who were highly *hedicated*; one played sweetly on the *forte piano*, the other sung in a fine

bravura style, and the third was sentimental, and wrote verses of such excellence, that some 'cute judges of them sort of things, attributed her effusions to the *helegant* pen of no less a poet than Sir Walter Scott. She herself had not been so *fortunate* as to get a first rate *hedication* ; but, as poor dear Mr. Gainham used to say, " learning was better than house and land," she had spared no expense in accomplishing her daughters, and she should like of all things to introduce Miss Thornhill to them ; and as she often gave parties, she hoped on the next occasion of the kind, to be honoured with her company. She would not fail to send an early invitation." Emily dexterously escaped from this torrent of garrulity by giving an air of graceful politeness, to the sly and irresistible humour which almost laughed in her eyes and played on her countenance, while she assured Mrs. Gainham that the honour of her acquaintance was the first wish of her heart, and that she was dying to know the all-accomplished Miss Gainhams. Not long after this interview, she received a card, announcing that Mrs. Gainham, on the Thursday evening following would give a ball and

supper. But, learning that the Gainhams were the *butt* of the whole fashionable world, that Mrs. Gainham especially was no sooner introduced into a family, than she persecuted them with well-meant, but awkward and unseasonable attentions, and that the late Richard Gainham, esq., Merchant, Government Contractor, and Banker, had amassed the fortune which enabled his family to make such a figure by a series of cruel exactions and oppressions, Emily determined to avoid all unnecessary intercourse with these upstarts of fashion. She did not wish to be annoyed by the living, or to bear any portion of the disgrace which rested upon the memory of the dead. In this respect she differed greatly from people of the highest distinction. With them a splendid establishment frequently outweighs all other considerations; and though they have a keen perception of all that is vulgar, and an affected contempt of all that is vicious, yet both vulgarity and vice they not only tolerate, but readily welcome, provided they are clothed in purple, and fare sumptuously every day. In order at once to check the threatened intimacy with Mrs. Gainham,

Emily excused herself from being present at her intended ball, on the ground of having taken a violent cold, which severely affected her throat and lungs; and this excuse, understood literally by the simple Mrs. Gainham, had brought her, as the maid of Emily had predicted, to inquire after the health of the invalid, and to offer her all the remedies which her knowledge and experience of domestic pharmacy enabled her to prepare and to recommend. Happily for Miss Thornhill, this interview, which might have involved her in a very awkward dilemma, and for which she was so little prepared, was turned to very good account by the unexpected appearance of Capt. Dormer, who drawing up his dashing new tilbury *en face* with the carriage already at the door, had entered the hall almost at the same moment with Mrs. Gainham. Emily relied upon the Captain's *tact* and dexterity to get her handsomely through her difficulties; indeed she found that she had no alternative but suddenly to recover, and to promise her attendance at the ball, feeling assured that she would be able to enlist Dormer and a few of his friends to sustain her on the occasion.

The amphibious nature of Dormer's pursuits, we have already hinted at. Alternately, buck or beau, Nimrod or dandy, he passed at will from the one extreme to the other, and doubled these incongruous characters with equal ease and propriety. The first of them he has now the honour to personate; and never was comedian better dressed for his part. His costume, though such as in our play-going days (at least a quarter of a century since), we remember to have seen assumed by Filch, in the Beggar's Opera, and others of a like description; and though far, very far, removed from that which in our antiquated ideas we had supposed as characteristic of a gentleman, was such as many young men of the present age would consider the only habit a man of fashion could appear in. It was certainly perfection of its kind, and fully justified the encomium of Dormer's groom, who swore that morning "that master *knowed* how to dress more beautiful, that is more *flash* beautiful, nor any *gennulman* in *Lunnun*." His outward man then was decorated *à-la-mode*. *Imprimis*, with a hat which, though shallow in the head (as if

to resemble its master), encroached so excessively in the brim, that, except in the presence of a lady (for then he always took it off), it might occasion the wearer to be mistaken for the Patriarch of that sober and demure sect called Quakers. This impression, if once made, however, the very next article would infallibly remove—this presented itself in the shape of a huge cravat, of coloured muslin, wrapped in enormous folds round his throat, and clasped in front with a large gold brooch, representing a neck-and-neck race at Newmarket. His coat, we beg pardon, his tunic,—was a surtout of the colour called pepper-and-salt, closing at the breast with a single row of enormous pearl buttons, and opening to display a light fancy waistcoat, with buttons of the same material, while a silk under-waistcoat was disclosed beneath it. The remainder of his person was contained in a milk-white cord *culotte*, gloves to correspond, and jockey boots; a silk handkerchief of the kind commonly called Belcher, occupied his left hand; his right grasped one of Crowther's whips. His dress displayed a striking contrast between the fineness of its quality and the vulgarity of its

style ; and his figure, if engraved, would present a *tout ensemble* that might puzzle the future antiquary to determine whether it was intended to represent a gentleman or a groom. In support of his character as a buck, he had this morning, previous to repairing to the grand *mill* at Moulsey Hurst, dropped in at Tattersall's, pocketed a cool hundred, laid bets on the fight, by which he hoped to pocket a couple more, and picked up a new friend and a new slang phrase. With the latter of these he was come, as he termed it, *to try it on* with the ladies.

As Emily's footman reported the official intelligence, which we have so unseasonably delayed, that his mistress was *bonâ fide* "at home," the Captain lost no time in alighting and ushering Mrs. Gainham up stairs, the latter of whom no sooner entered the room, than she burst into an expression of condolence on Emily's indisposition. Dormer, quite a stranger to this *ruse de guerre* of his fair friend, was about to give audible expression to his look of surprise at this intelligence, when a significant glance from Emily at once furnished him with his cue—"Oh ! yes, begged pardon ; heard some ladies saying how immensely sorry they were Miss

Thornhill was so ill; could'nt remember who it was—always forgot people's names. Never mind, Miss Thornhill, you are looking charmingly now; no one would think you had been ill—(Emily blushed)—you'll do now—*that's right—keep it up—go the pace.*" The Captain having thus tried the operation of his mystic phrase, paused, and gave Mrs. Gainham an opportunity to make her kind offers of assistance. She had taken the liberty of calling, solely to inquire after Miss Thornhill's health; she had also brought with her some cordials—mere trifles—things of her own composition; but as they required particular care rightly to administer them, in which case they never failed of cure, she would, with Miss Thornhill's permission, stay the whole morning, and show her how to take them. Poor Emily, thus threatened to be confined as an invalid, and drenched with medicine which she did not require, was obliged to summon all her courage and skill to repel so formidable an attack. She thanked Mrs. Gainham, kindly thanked her; but she knew not how it was, she was quite well this morning,—never was better in her life; she begged she might not detain

Mrs. Gainham for an instant on her account, she should be most unwilling to do so. Her ball taking place that same evening, the time of Mrs. Gainham must be fully occupied.

The kind-hearted Mrs. Gainham, gratified beyond measure at hearing this account of Emily's convalescence repeated by her own lips, confirmed as it was by the unequivocal testimony of her charming looks, took advantage of this circumstance to renew her former invitation. Primming her mouth up to its most gracious expression, and sideling like a crab across the room, for the purpose of grasping with her enormous hand the delicate arm of the astonished Emily, "Indeed, dear," she exclaimed, in a coaxing tone of voice, "you must come, we cannot do without you; you may retire early, or command any accommodation my house and all that's in it can afford." "Yes," said Dormer, who it appeared was to be there, "'pon honour, Miss Thornhill, you must go; there's nothing for an invalid like dancing; the French now, they always dance, ill or well, and they manage these things a vast deal better than we do. Their girls live for ever—charming at ninety, and go out of the world

with a *chassée en avant*. Yes, you must go ; you will, I know ; *that's right—keep it up—go the pace.*” With a slight show of reluctance, Emily yielded to the united importunity of her guests. Mrs. Gainham broke into expressions of undissembled satisfaction :—“ Dear,” she exclaimed, “ I am so delighted with your compliance ; indeed I am, and I don't care who knows it : we never should have done without you. But now you'll come, and be sure come early ; we shan't begin without you, and you and Captain Dormer shall open the ball.” Emily bowed assent, and Dormer literally capered for joy. “ We'll lead off with a waltz,” said he, doubtfully, as if to anticipate Emily's wish ; “ but I believe, Miss Thornhill, you prefer a quadrille,” he added, with more assurance ; “ then a quadrille it shall be, by Jupiter. *Allons donc, that's right, keep it up, go the pace,*” and with a graceful adieu, he retired, Mrs. Gainham taking advantage of his arm to conduct her to her carriage.

Emily, fairly rid of her tormentor, lost no time in summoning to her chamber her faithful Gertrude. With her mistress this worthy indispensable was closeted in deep consul-

tation "an hour by the dial." Without exposing ourselves to the charge of scandal, we may reasonably opine, that the all-important article of dress was the sole subject of inquiry and discussion in this protracted *tête-à-tête*. One dress was rejected because it came too high; another, because it fell too low; a third, because it made the complexion look too pale; and a fourth, as it gave it a tint too vulgar and red; and so on to the seventeenth dress, which having been tried on for the seventeenth time, was approved, and the order issued for its being in readiness by the evening. Necklaces and fans we would observe, *en passant*, were chosen or rejected on points which for intricacy might have puzzled the twelve judges; but dismissing these and other inferior preliminary matters, and coming at once "*in medias res*," we beg to announce, that at an early hour, Emily, accompanied by a female relative, and Dormer as her *cavalier*, entered the ball-room.

A buzz of admiration was heard wherever she approached. Indeed, "never alighted on our orb, which she scarcely seemed to touch, a more delightful vision." She moved along in all the majesty of trium-

phant loveliness. Nor is it possible to describe the elegance of her well-chosen attitudes; the grace of her elastic step; the magic of her smiles, and the music of her voice. Yet was she rather a seductive than an overpowering beauty. Her stature was not commanding, nor was she formed according to the exact proportions of a *Venus de Medicis*; but the idea of beauty was in her soul, and it lived in every motion, in every look. Her eyes, when she was free from excitement, inclined rather to hazel than to black; but when thought was awakened in her mind, or emotion was stirred in her heart, they darkened as they shone. Liquid in their lustre, they were equally bright and soft, arch and innocent, playful and tender; and illumined from their long and beautiful fringes, a countenance which was formed to be eloquent; whatever she thought she felt, and whatever she felt beamed in her face; to be dumb would have been less a calamity to her than to any human being. The tendency to opposite extremes in her character, which was evidently impressed upon her features, gave the principal charm to her person; and thus completely

distinguished her from the insipid automata of fashion. Judging from her physiognomy alone, Philosophy might have exulted in her as the most sedate and devoted of his pupils ; and frivolity as the most ready and extravagant of her votaries. If the angel of mercy had wished to employ a mortal to personate celestial goodness in relieving human misery, on her he might have fixed his choice ; and had the goddess of mirth met her, she would, at once, have marked her for her own. To the light and volatile part of her nature, however, education and habit had lent their all-powerful aid, and she was rather capable of being excited to the more grave and valuable than inclined and disposed to indulge it.

On the present occasion, she completely resigned herself to the genius of the evening. Her dress, though odiously fashionable, on her appeared just what it ought to be ; for what is it that beauty and elegance will not render becoming ? It was, however, the subject of ill-natured remark among the less distinguished belles around her ; and in proportion as she commanded the admiring gaze of the one sex, did she become the envy of the other. This double incense, offered at the shrine of

her vanity enlivened her spirits, and shed its grateful influence over her countenance. Dormer was absolutely entranced; and to the infinite mortification of some who imagined they had sufficient claims on his preference, he devoted his undivided and most courteous attentions to his fair charge; but we have too long detained our readers from this Proteus.

The stout and sturdy Hercules of the morning, in his rude but manly costume, could not be recognised in the diminished form and tightened dress of the evening fop. The turbulent Jehu, the envy of his brother whips and the terror of every drayman, from Hyde-park-corner to Temple-bar, was pared and pinched, scented and softened into the slender, pliable, and obsequious beau, who,

“ Instead of mounting barbed steeds

To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,”

seemed fit only to “ caper nimbly in a lady’s chamber to the lascivious breathing of a lute.” So complete was his metamorphosis, that he appeared to have changed his person with his clothes; even his “ big manly voice dwindled into childish treble, and piped and whistled in the sound.”

C H A P. VII.

“ Nor cold, nor stern my soul! yet I detest
These scented rooms”——

“ Hark the deep buzz of vanity and hate.
Scornful, yet envious, with self-torturing sneer,
My lady eyes some maid of humbler state,
While the pert Captain or the primmer Priest
Prattles accordant scandal in her ear.”—*Coleridge*.

Duke, Senior. “ But what said Jaques?
Did he not moralize this spectacle?
First Lord. O, yes, my lord.”—*Shakspeare*.

TO the moralist, a fashionable ball-room exhibits a strange and very humiliating picture of human nature. Considered simply in the light of an amusement, where the intelligent, the virtuous, and the polite mingle, during a few hours of relaxation, to increase the sum of individual gaiety by mutual participation, the spectacle would indeed be exhilarating and joyous. But this is not the character of any of the misnamed pleasures

of the world. They are not the recreation, for to this they are ill adapted, but they are the business of existence. The early and the best part of life is spent in qualifying the frequenters of balls and routs to appear among their kindred triflers with *eclat*. And after the severe and protracted task of preparation is ended, and the well-disciplined animals are privileged to herd together, where whim and fashion may conduct them, the whole intervening time is wasted in adjusting and determining what parties they shall visit, what dresses they shall wear, what nonsense they shall utter, what friends betray, and what rivals annoy.

The "trysting place" is the scene of combat rather than of social intercourse. The skirmishes of vanity in which every belle and every beau is striving to excel and outshine their innumerable compeers, are maintained with a dexterity and steadiness worthy of a better cause. Instead of a disposition to please and to be pleased, its semblance only is assumed; and, under this deceitful guise, lurk envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness. The exultation of triumph, and the mortification of defeat, divide the whole

gay and volatile assemblage. All are odious in each other's eyes, and the only real pleasure that lights up any countenance, arises from the consciousness of having inflicted pain, and the irradiation springs from the fires of the bottomless pit. A few, perhaps, there may be, whom custom and the *tedium* of life have placed on the muster-roll of fashion, who merely mingle in these agitated and brilliant circles to pass away their time, to let their numberless acquaintances know that they are still in the land of the living, and who just appear on such occasions "to see the great Babel, and to feel the stir." But an immense majority are anxious and busy actors in the scène.

After Emily, for a few minutes, had endured the intense and rude, we ought rather to say fashionable, gaze of the party already assembled at Mrs. Gainham's, and had withstood, with all due confidence, a volley of quizzing glasses that assailed every part of her figure, at one and the same moment, she was led by Dormer to a vacant sofa, where they were speedily joined by some of his friends. The first who approached was an exquisite, that is, a creature of fashion, belonging to a once

numerous and effeminate class, distinguished by the generic appellation of Dandies. Morbid, sensitive, and elegant, the genuine Dandy cannot breathe in our common atmosphere ; he cannot endure the rude and boisterous world which Fate, in the very frolic of her caprice, has strangely destined him to inhabit. The only beings with whom he can deign to converse, and then in a language of his own, are those who, like himself, feel a thorough contempt for every thing that does not refine and deify the senses. Exquisites are ultra Dandies, and have generally more of the starch and stays, and less of the spirit of Dandyism. The whole species are lineal descendants of the Mohawks of the Spectator, and the ruffians and bloods of the Guardian. But the emasculating influence of luxury has totally destroyed all resemblance between the offspring and their parents. Intermediate generations were improved by the gradual progress of civilization ; and the beaux of the last age, though scented and powdered, retained something of a manly character. But their successors of the present day have lost almost every trace of humanity. It is certain they

are of doubtful gender (*heteroclita sunt*), and have never been claimed by either sex. This circumstance, however, so far from depreciating their merit, has endowed them with a mysterious attraction. They are regarded by the fair as a kind of earthly genii; and they view them with the same interest with which they would gaze on tulips and carnations if they could believe them inspired with intelligence and sensation; but, alas! tulips and carnations fade, and Dandies live not for ever.

In a few short months every vestige of them will disappear. Yes, these Ariels of the enchanted island of fashion are, at this moment, on the wing; already the regrets and the tears of beauty bemoan their threatened departure; and unless the mighty chasm be filled up by something as delicate which shall exhale its little soul in sighs, and breathe its innocent tenderness in whispers, soft and balmy as zephyr languishing o'er a bed of roses—the Lucindas and the Clarissas, the Lady Di's, and the Lady Bels must return again to lavish all their fondness on their monkeys, their lap-dogs, and their parrots. Alas! the age of Dandyism is gone.

“ Αἰᾶζω τὸν Ἀδωνιν· ἐπαιάζουσιν Ἐρωτές

* * * * *

Αἱ αἱ τὰν Κυθέρειαν ἀπώλετο καλὸς Ἀδωνις.”

The deplorable fact we have now stated, received abundant confirmation at Mrs. Gainham's ball. On this occasion, those who formerly gloried in the distinction which Dandyism conferred, seemed half ashamed to acknowledge it. The Glendoveers, in whom dwelt the spirit of genuine refinement, and the elegance of superior *bon-ton*, no longer graced the temple. Borne away by some “ship of heaven,” with one or two exceptions, only a few spurious imitators remained, destitute alike of the delicacy and the taste which threw around their departed originals, the charm of irresistible fascination.

Dormer, as we have intimated, was a Dandy in his exterior, and when it suited the whim of the moment, he performed the character well, and was certainly a graceful actor. But the exquisite (to whom the reader is indebted for this long digression) was formed by nature and art to be the thing it seemed: a sort of connecting link between the sexes, it must have been a Dandy or nothing. It

had no alternative, and it desired none. Its fate was its choice—*aut Cæsar, aut nullus*. As an elegant piece of mechanism, it could talk, sing, dance, play on the piano-forte; and, in short, was the very counterpart of those automata or wooden men that are constantly exhibited in every metropolis in Europe; and like those, having travelled in foreign parts, it had brought back, as its sole acquisition, the faculty of addressing to you a very few hackneyed terms and phrases in the languages of the various countries it had passed through. It was perpetually accosting you with “*Wie gehts,*” as we say at Vienna; “*Come sta,*” as they ask you at Naples; “*Cela va-t-il bien,*” as they inquire at Paris. In short, as says our immortal bard, it “had been at a great feast of languages, and brought away the scraps.”

Though possessing none of the essential spirit of Dandyism, it was a very respectable sample of the every-day things that scent the air of Brighton Steyne, and promenade so elegantly on tip-toe, the *pavé* of Bond-street. With its legs a little crossed, it was negligently leaning on the arm of its companion, when it lisped out an affected com-

pliment to Emily. The companion was a being of a higher order, though somewhat of an eccentric. This was a stage-struck hero,—"an amateur of fashion,"—who, envying the notoriety of Romeo Coates, resolved to imitate him. Alas! the shadow of a shade. In vain did he toil after his great prototype: he followed: *sed non passibus æquis*. Happily for his fame, he did not venture to expose himself on the boards of any regular theatre, nor did he ever gratify a convulsed audience by dying a second and a third time at their obstreperous demand; but in private theatricals he had enjoyed the enviable luxury of being supported by a few of his personal friends, who had once or twice succeeded in overpowering, by their clamorous approbation, the hisses and groans of the whole company. He was well educated, of a good family, and of an amiable disposition, but was unaccountably seized with the passion of rendering himself ridiculous. Actors and acting, theatres and theatricals, engrossed his whole attention. He was literally a theatrical library, a walking prompt book, and a curse or an invocation was for ever on his tongue.

Dormer, he accosted with

“ Hail to your lordship.”

And saluted Emily with

“ How do you, Desdemona ?”

But while busied in selecting something most appropriate from among the innumerable appropriate fragments and sentences pent up in his memory and impatient for utterance, he was interrupted by the arrival of some other young men. Among them were two youths, who, emulous of Dormer's celebrity, aspired to share it with him. In short, they were his imitators, his doubles, or, as he sometimes more characteristically described them, his “ *âmes damnées*.” He was their Satan, and they his spell-bound victims. Their office was, to do whatever he did. This they were always striving to accomplish, aping his freaks and floundering at his heels; like clown after harlequin, and generally with the same success as attends that renowned hero of mischance. In the present instance one wore his arm in a sling, from having, at the request of Dormer, rode his horse at full gallop, in doing which, he was

thrown ; the disaster might have been fatal, but luckily he fell upon his head : the other bore the marks of some severe bruises from a hackney coachman, whom Dormer had persuaded him to box. How many more of the accumulating and fantastic throng would have hailed Dormer for the sake of gazing on Emily, and basking in the heaven of her smiles, it is not easy to divine. Certain it is, her sofa was the point of attraction, and she sat like a queen receiving the homage of an increasing levee, when an unusual bustle among the company announced that dancing was about to begin. Emily rose, and was conducted by her delighted partner to the scene of action. The party were arranging for a quadrille, when the leader of the band, a Frenchman, approached Miss Thornhill, and with a thousand grimaces, shrugs, and bows, presented her with the music of a new country dance of his own composing, which he respectfully begged she would do him the honour to lead off. Emily, with graceful compliance, consented. The brilliant assemblage was instantly in motion. Elegance, grace, and beauty, animated with the soul of harmony, exhibited a spectacle which a

superficial observer might have mistaken for the acme of delight ; and in the gay illusion of the scene, it may be presumed, that the amiable and social feelings obtained a momentary triumph, except, indeed, among the spectators, where *belles*, without partners, felt the bitterness of chagrin ; and dowagers, whose *rouge* but ill concealed the wrinkles of age, avenged the loss of their charms by satirical and malevolent observations on those who were still youthful and lovely. The latter, however, soon made their way to the card-tables, which were liberally provided in rooms expressly fitted up for their accommodation.

Without digressing on the subject, so as to lose ourselves in the labyrinths of moulinet, allemande, and poussette, we shall content ourselves with saying, that, aided by the captivating figure and graceful steps of Emily, who was well supported by the exquisite performance of Dormer (for in this elegant accomplishment he stood unrivalled), the new dance met with general approbation, was honoured by the voice of the assembly with the name which had introduced it with so much *eclat*, and is at this moment

a favourite in the circles of fashion. Emily on this occasion excelled herself, nor was she ever beheld to greater advantage. Her complexion, somewhat too languishing and pale, was now heightened by the animation of the evening to a glow of "celestial rosy red." Her fine dark eye beamed with vivacity, her glossy hair played in wanton ringlets on her face, or drooped in striking contrast on her marble neck, while her sylph-like form, now seen now lost amid the mazes of the dance, presented an idea of ethereal and super-human loveliness. Fatal loveliness, for the spoiler was near, and marked it for his prey. In the records of domestic misery, what a dismal pre-eminence is given to the assembly and ball-room of fashion. The dance concluded ; Emily withdrew to a part of the room where, without mingling in the croud, she could observe what was passing around her. She was soon joined by Dormer and his companions, with two or three ladies of her acquaintance, and the party proceeded to talk nonsense and scandal "*pour passer le tems.*" The good lady of the house was selected as the most prominent object of sarcasm, which was couched in the usual

strain of fashionable guests, who, in return for the hospitality which has received and entertained them, commonly amuse themselves by railing at the founder and abusing the feast.

In justice to Emily we must, however, remark, that she repelled with lively and indignant repartee this ungenerous attack; and heard with the most poignant regret, that the splendor and fashion which she little expected to see at Mrs. Gainham's, and the good taste and elegance which every where prevailed, were to be attributed to a fact which was maliciously told by one of the party, ludicrously commented upon by another, and loudly laughed at by all—a fact which we hope, for the honour of the fashionable world, stands alone in the history of their crimes and follies. It was this,—that a dashing dowager, notorious for her pecuniary embarrassments, and fondness for deep play, had, for the sake of a valuable consideration (some said a large *douceur*), taken Mrs. Gainham and daughters under the wing of her protection, and engaged to introduce them to all her friends, or, as the fashionable phrase is, to bring them out,

but rather, as Dormer sneeringly observed, in his commentary, to *take them in*. A few of Mrs. Gainham's city acquaintances, whom she had unluckily introduced, while parading the room, received several vollies of ridicule.

A young man, who was to inherit the fortune of his uncle, a sugar-boiler, of great wealth and eminence, and who distinguished himself by his excessive attachment to every folly of fashion, was too fair a mark to escape. His dress was chiefly remarkable for its ultra Dandyism, and his awkward lanky figure, almost cut in two at the waist, by the extreme pressure of a pair of very tight stays, gave to the wearer some resemblance of an overgrown wasp; he was likewise manacled at the wrist by enormous bands of stiffened linen, while the same confinement in the shape of cravat and shirt collar, was applied to his neck; so that from the habit of holding his hands in an extended position, for fear of spoiling his wristbands, and from the rotatory evolution he performed when he wished to turn his head, he looked exactly like a man in the pillory. "Here," cries Dormer, "here we

come from the wrong side of Temple-bar—three to two that's one of Mrs. Gainham's city friends. What a caricature has he made of himself! *Comme il singe le Dandi!* He's really obliged to stand on tip-toe to look over his shirt collar, and cannot turn his head unless he goes to the right about." "I believe," said the exquisite, with an affected lisp, "it's the *manth* nephew who *makth thugar*." "And," said the Marquis of W., who had just joined the coterie, "affecting the Dandy at this time of day, when the thing's quite gone by ——"

The exquisite here ventured to interpose in behalf of his brother Dandies, *et id genus omne*. But this was overruled at once by Dormer's exclaiming, "No! that won't do. The dress, the habits of the Dandy, may be retained by the *Sieur Calicots*, and the numerous host of man milliners; but we must start something fresh. Dandyism among us must go out. The *materiél* of the thing may be kept up, but the *personel* is quite abandoned. Like mules, Dandies are the first, and will be the last, of their family. The whole generation savour strongly of 'mine ancient,' and as some-

body said of a kitten, ‘time, that spoils
‘all things, will soon turn her into a cat,’
we may now affirm of the Dandies;
with their juvenility they have lost all that
rendered them attractive. *Old Potts* and
old Brummel make a sorry figure now that
they have reached their grand climacteric.”*
“But is not the threatened extinction of
Dandyism deeply to be regretted?” inquired
Emily. “In the galaxy of fashion they
were the brightest stars—so refined, and so
intellectual,” continued she, smiling, “at
their departure, like the daughters of Greece,
we must weep that ‘the spring is cut out
‘of our year.’” “Nay, Miss Thornhill,”
replied Dormer, “you must not ridicule
the whole fraternity. Have you never met
with *clever* Dandies? What say you to
Sk—g—n and P——m?” “Why, yes,”
rejoined Emily, “I cannot deny but that I
have occasionally witnessed such phænomena;
as I have sometimes seen, with surprise,
certain quadrupeds remarkable for
their expertness in dancing to the sound of
the pipe and tabor; and, in both cases, I

* Dandies and monkeys, it is said, arrive at this period much earlier than other animals.

have been struck with the wonderful effects of an early and well-conducted education.” —Here a solemn personage interposed ; he was a member of the House of Commons, very young and very formal, whose seat his father purchased for him in hope that by his deep sonorous voice, grave appearance, and subserviency to the ministry, he might one day rise to the dignity of Speaker, and this nickname he had already acquired among his acquaintance. Quite in character on the present occasion, observing that there appeared some difference of opinion, he begged to take the sense of the company on the subject: “ All those,” said he, “ who are of opinion that no gentleman can be a Dandy, will please to signify the same.” “ All, all,” was the reply.—“ The contrary.” “ None:”—“ The ayes have it,” said he, with inconceivable gravity of face and utterance.

The exquisite, however, appeared little disposed to concur in this annihilation of himself, “ and all his tribe:” he still lisped out his unmeaning remonstrance, and, notwithstanding the decision of this parliament of fashion, he continues to the present

moment, *stiff* in his attachment to starch and stays :

“ *Victrix causa Diis placuit, sed victa Catoni.*”—*Lucan.*

Just as this debate had ended, the three Misses Gainham and their beau opportunely passing at the moment, became topics of animadversion. To form an idea of these young ladies, be pleased, gentle reader, to imagine three girls immoderately short and fat, who were, indeed, as broad as they were long, dressed, or rather undressed, in all the exposure of a modern belle, and squired by a little Dandy man still shorter than themselves, whom each wished to secure as her partner, and who thus, like Paris on Mount Ida, was tempted and tormented by three divinities at once. “ Here,” said Dormer, as they approached, “ we have Actæon among the nymphs.” “ Say rather,” rejoined Emily, “ Love among the roses. Nay,” she added, on looking nearer and perceiving the grimaces of the hen-pecked bantam, “ the gentleman confesses it by his looks, for he seems as if he were really upon thorns.” At this sally, the exquisite simpered applause, and the theatrical casting a humourous glance on the

urchin beau, gravely announced—"Ladies and gentlemen; this evening will be performed, by particular desire of several persons of distinction, Alexander the Great, or the Rival Queens."

"And note," continued Dormer, "the affectation of these *imbecilles*, who, *pour se francifier*, sport an enormous ridicule, and carry it every where with them." "Alas!" rejoined Emily, with a sigh of pity at their affectation, the kindness of which almost redeems the pun, "I fear they are doomed to carry the ridicule wherever they go."—At this the exquisite lisped out "*Parola d'onor, Mith Thornhill*, you're quite a *quith*."

A titled lady now presented herself, who afforded a sad mark for the satire of our scorers, inasmuch as she displayed, by the ravages of her features, an excessive predilection for the unfeminine indulgence of the bottle. "Ah!" cried the theatrical, "enter Bardolph with a red nose." "There," replied Dormer, "you are mistaken; her ladyship's proboscis is dyed with the purple light of love; though in my opinion she would shine more in water colours."

The doubles laughed approbation at this *insipid* joke, and a new arrival offered new matter of censure.

A city dame, spouse to an eminent jeweller, now passed in review. In her vulgar pomposity of carriage and manner, she exhibited all the insolence of low breeding, while with ill-judged show she displayed in her dress a profusion of the choicest and most expensive jewels. "There," said Dormer, "there's a travelling trinket shop. Well, the poor thing is but dressed in borrowed plumage; the jewels that adorn her to-night will return to her shop-window in the morning." "Ah! here she comes," exclaimed one of the doubles; "four by honours—queen of diamonds. May it please your splendid majesty," he continued, in a tone of affected reverence, and almost loud enough to be heard by the object of his *badinage*, who that moment turning her broad full-moon face on the speaker, utterly disconcerted him, to the no small amusement of his mischievous companions; when the theatrical hearing only the term Queen, and ignorant of its application, strutted

forth, and in a fifth act attitude, exclaimed—

“ Catch it, ye winds,
“ And bear it on your rosy wings to heaven :
“ Cordelia shall be Queen.”

“ With all deference to the lofty buskin,” rejoined Dormer, “ if the heavens are to receive any joyous tidings (and I beg that the rosy wings will, for a moment, suspend their flight), let it be announced to the gods that Miss Thornhill reigns the elected Queen of HEARTS.” “ Queen of *hearts*!” echoed Emily ; “ where, in the name of fashion, am I to find subjects ? I fear the empire of hearts lies in some far distant Utopia, where balls and beaux are alike unknown. Why, why then, will you banish me from a scene so bright and fair ? Dormer,” she added, with affected tenderness, “ force me not to leave thee.” Almost annihilated by this unexpected sally, he was about to reply ; but Emily, with serious meaning in her face, and an ill-suppressed sigh, whispered to him the lines of Schiller :

“ Yes, he deserves to find himself deceived
“ Who seeks a heart in the unthinking man.”

Then, with an irresistible smile, she proceeded aloud,—“What an uncharitable groupe do we form, examining and condemning every one who comes before us,—we are lurking here, making prey of every body, and remaining ourselves sheltered and unexposed.—Come, Dormer,” she added, “you are not on rifle-service now; quit, then, this sorry ambush, and brave manfully the sarcasms you so well deserve.” Here the exquisite attempted a *bon-mot*—“Ah, *Mith* Thornhill,” it lisped, “why *expothe uth* to the danger which your lovely *eyeth* ——” “My lovely eyes always go to sleep, Sir,” said Emily, “when gentlemen talk nonsense.” “Sleep on, then, and take your rest,” said a voice in a tone of bitter scorn,—“Sleep till the day of doom.” This strange and unexpected salute proceeded from a person of high birth, who affected to be, or was in reality, a misanthrope.

“Cross’d with care, or craz’d with hopeless love,”

yet, perfectly harmless, he was privileged, even in the most polite circles, to utter the rudest sarcasms and reproaches with impu-

nity. "Here nonsense is oracular," he steadily continued, as if totally unconscious of the titter and surprise which his first observation had produced, "here, as if by common consent, all that would improve the understanding and refresh the heart, is excluded. This is Folly's Temple; and there stands (pointing to Emily) its fairest and most costly victim. You, Sir (addressing Dormer) are the officiating high-priest.—That beauteous sacrifice has a heart; but Folly is a cruel deity.—Oh, that such a heart should be doomed to bleed on such an altar! For the last half hour, in all the proud consciousness of superior *ton* and superior wit, you have been levelling your artillery at the unoffending; but you, too, have had your censors. The sybils of Scandal have told your fortune, and Envy is even now exulting over your fate. Lady, beware! Joy flows not to the human spirit pure from the fountain, and here its streams are tainted with intoxicating and deadly poison. The flowers of this Eden are bright and beautiful, but

"The trail of the Serpent is over them all."

With a look more in pity than in anger, this singular being passed into the crowd. As he turned away, the theatrical, half kneeling and in tremulous accents, cried,

“ Art thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn’d ?
————— Alas ! poor Ghost ! ”

The exquisite smiled—showed its pretty white teeth, but could say nothing. After having been a few moments in reverie, it however summoned up courage to attempt another compliment, which was intended to be in honour of Emily’s dress: “ *Mith Thornhill*,” it sapiently observed, “ your dress is really the perfection of pink, while you yourself —— ” “ I myself am the pink of perfection, I suppose,” rejoined the lively girl; “ and thus the comparison ends.” The creature, again repulsed, sunk into its former insignificance and silence. They were now accosted by Lord John Fribble, a personage so extremely lean and spare, that he had acquired the nick-name of “ John of Gaunt : ” his intellect was also as spare as his person, and he was by no means either well-informed or well-read. He addressed Emily with “ What is this

new dance that all the people talk about ?” “ Oh,” replied Emily, “ it’s quite an irregular thing, my Lord ; not one of the figures at the four corners is a right figure.” His Lordship bowed, and walked off ; delighted with the information thus readily acquired. Passing by the “ pomp and circumstance” of a quadrille, in which Emily took part with her accustomed grace and usual share of applause ; and the refreshments of the supper-table, where every delicacy, whether in season or out of season, was served in the most elegant form that taste could suggest ; we proceed to observe, that, after supper, the matrons and elderly gentlemen of the party, and others, who preferred the sobriety of whist and cassino to insipid noise and nonsense, sat down to cards, while the company in general lounged through the rooms, talking, tittering, and quizzing, without any other object than to get rid of the enemy—the usual appellation of Time in the nomenclature of fashion.

A few, however, who either really possessed, or affected to possess, a taste for music, adjourned to the music-room. Among these, were Emily, Dormer, Mrs. Gainham

and her daughters, and a few lisping, languishing, but faded beauties. A grand piano-forte, from the center of which shone a flaming gold star, relieved by a ground of deep crimson velvet, was the first object which struck the admiring attention of the guests. Mrs. Gainham assured her friends, “that most people thought it very *helegant*. She had bought it, she said, for two purposes—to employ and display the skill of her daughters, and to amuse herself when they were from home ; not that she had ever learnt, but it had got two or three barrels, *and played so beautiful all alone by itself*; she liked it amazingly, it was such good company.” A splendid harp occupied another part of the room ; and now the only thing necessary was, to select performers who could make these instruments “discourse most excellent music.” All eyes were turned to Emily, but she begged that Miss Grace Gainham, of whose vocal and instrumental fascinations she had heard so much, might precede her. This young lady, who possessed no natural taste for the accomplishments which she had laboured hard to acquire, was flattered into a persuasion, that

she was an admirable singer. Of science, indeed, she might reasonably boast ; but having no melody in her soul, she had none in her voice : it was harsh and dissonant, and wanted both sweetness and compass. Yet, unconscious of these disadvantages, she sat down to attempt a most difficult *aria* of Mazzinghi's. The contrast between her squeaking and discordant tones, and the softness and majesty of the Italian music, was too striking to escape the ridicule of the company. Accordingly, the theatrical meeting Lord John Fribble, exclaimed, " My Lord, my Lord, yonder's foul murder done ;" while the exquisite observed, " How *ridiculouth* it *wath* for a woman to attempt to *thing* who had no *voith*."

Having finished her task, and heard a thousand compliments on the wonderful science and power of her execution, Miss Gainham led Emily to the harp. Sincerely pitying the failure she had just witnessed, Miss Thornhill resolved to prevent the possibility of ill-natured comparison by undertaking something in a totally different style. Relinquishing, therefore, all pretensions and all rivalry, she sung, with melting tenderness, the following simple ballad :

O WAKE, love, wake, can such an hour
Be lent alone to slumber's power?

O, no! 'twas made
For the moon-light walks, where lovers meet,
And the silver songs, and the music sweet,
Of their serenade,

And rise, love, rise, the queen of night
Upbraids thy rest, for her smiles are bright
On thy casement now;
And the fairest forms of love and bliss
Are awake and abroad, in a night like this—
Then, where art thou?

O quit, love, quit those visions blest,
That hover around thy couch of rest,
From realms above;
Forget, if thou canst, the halcyon theme,
And wake to as holy, as happy a dream—
The dream of love.

And hark, love, hark to yon melody faint,
'Tis the song of the nightingale pouring her plaint
To the starry ray;
But the only orbs that can cheer my night,
And bless my song with their looks of light—
Oh, where are they?

And list, love, list, mid the silence around
Thou shalt hear beside, the murmur'd sound
Of thy lover's lay;

As he sings, that the earth and the skies are dim,
And the beauty of night hath no beauty for him,
While thou art away.

Then wake thee, wake thou sweetest flower,
And quit for a moment thy virgin bower,
For thy true love's sake ;
There is nought to harm thee, around, or on high,
The earth is tranquil, and so is the sky—
Then wake, love, wake.

She hears, she wakes ; from her window far,
The well-known sound of her lover's guitar
Hath caught her ear ;
And see at her casement she takes her stand,
And waving slow her lily hand,
She wafts a kiss to her cavalier.

As the soft and tender tones of the harp died away, rapturous *bravos* burst from every part of the room. Emily sighed ; she knew how to appreciate them. They were ready for every occasion,—waited on every performer,—and had even greeted the miserable attempt of Miss Grace Gainham. Such applause she also felt to be totally unsuited to the class of emotions to which she had just given indulgence, and which she had

hoped to excite in her audience. With these, however, there was not one that knew how to sympathise, and only one who *affected* to be moved by them. The theatrical hesitated for a moment, whether to exclaim “something too much of this,” which was the real conviction of his mind, or to utter some apposite compliment ;—the latter seemed more *comme il faut*,—and assuming the intoxicated joyousness of Cassio, he addressed Emily with “Why, this is a more exquisite song than the other.” Lord John Fribble whispered that he thought it too *lackidaisical*. It was love without licence, and his Lordship, of course, was unable to comprehend it. The ladies sneered, and charitably supposed, that Miss Thornhill was making an insidious attack on some unpractised swain, by a ridiculous affectation of sensibility. While Dormer, stung by the mysterious invectives of the misanthrope, seeing him approach, cried “Here comes Old Timon,—‘Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast.’” “True,” replied the object of his remark, with a look of sarcastic disdain, “but the boor of fashion is the most untameable brute

in its whole menagerie.” “ Yet,” he continued, relaxing his features into an expression of musing sadness, “ the human machine, destitute alike of heart and soul, can dissemble passion, assume tenderness, and woo and win the fair.” “ Good, very good,” said Dormer ; “ and therefore your splenetic envy cannot endure the success of your more happy rivals.” “ I—I, Mr. Dormer,” rejoined the misanthrope, with solemnity, “ I have long since renounced all pretensions to the heart of fickle woman : but why should I, or any man, despair ? Now-a-days, hands are given without hearts—and some hearts, alas ! are very weak. He must be destitute and forlorn indeed, who in this good-natured world is doomed to sigh in vain for beauty. It asks not for youth, for decrepitude on crutches has borne away the prize in triumph.—A manly person and a noble mien are not necessary ; for if Caliban were more than an ideal monster, and could mutter out his passion, there would be some charming creature whom his equipage, if not himself, would captivate, and loveliness and deformity would joyfully take each other for better and for worse. Even Poverty, the

very quintessence of all the ills in Pandora's Box, needs not remain in solitary wretchedness; for a husband, there are females who would impoverish Poverty itself; nay Vice, Vice, in the person of a fashionable rake, may surely reckon upon kind advocates and gentle apologists; for a thousand pretty languishing eyes are ready to tell him how supremely happy they should be to undertake his reformation." "The sex are deeply indebted to you, Sir," replied Emily, "for the good opinion which you entertain of them. Your observations are so just and discriminating, and their kindness is so unquestionable, that if they fail to instruct and reclaim us, we must be incorrigible." "Whatever severity there may be in my manner," rejoined the misanthrope, "my heart feels only pity and regret. If in such an assembly as this I sacrifice courtesy to truth, I stand alone a monster of sincerity. The trifling things around me deceive each other by mutual consent. It is because I honour and love the sex that I sometimes force myself to become their monitor; and I charge upon the fashions of the day, upon every object and being with which the

higher order of females are constantly surrounded, a deliberate and systematic conspiracy to frivolize and falsify their minds, to induce a habit of life that makes folly its business, and pleasure its toil. I have gazed to-night on forms the most lovely, fluttering in meretricious exposure, whose only ambition it has been, to become the temporary idols of beings as frivolous as themselves ; but who, stupid as they are, can ridicule—ay, and bitterly and grossly expose the weakness which thinks to charm them by a display which, in the females of their own family, or any females for whom they had a value, or even a respect, would disgust and revolt them.” “A sermon,* a homily, on my life,” interrupted Dormer. “Good, Dr. Cantwell, speak, and we will hear thee,” he continued, assuming a demure air and a drawling tone. The misanthrope, not a whit disconcerted, observed, that he felt

* Were not the thing impossible, we should infer, that Dormer had detected the misanthrope in a plagiarism from one of the most eloquent sermons in our language. The concluding sentence is certainly extracted *verbatim* from MATURIN's inimitable *Discourse on the Necessity of Female Education*.

not the slightest reluctance to pursue the subject. If he could be sure of an audience he would pledge himself to furnish them with what would certainly possess the merit of being a novel species of amusement.

Delighted with the proposal, the party ironically assured him that he should command their profoundest attention. With a simplicity, either affected or real, which seemed to favour the idea generally entertained of his being half insane, he gravely proceeded, “ You have all, I suppose, heard of ‘ Cœlebs in search of a Wife ? ’ this was once my character ; but I have long since renounced it. I am a bachelor at forty ; and a bachelor I intend to continue. Disappointed in my search, I have relinquished hope for ever. Once I was the creature of powerful feeling—now sensibility is dried up in my heart. I am no longer an actor, but an observer in the great drama of life. When I first united myself to the *Cœlebes*, I determined to quit them as soon as possible. Though a very numerous and wealthy order, I found, that the younger brethren only were respected by the world ; that a Cœlebs in search of a Wife, was every where

a welcome guest ; but that a Cœlebs whose conduct indicated satisfaction with his state, was, after a certain period, an object of ridicule and contempt. Several times I have been on the point of quitting the fraternity, but either my evil or my good genius interposed, and the cup of bitterness or the cup of bliss has been dashed, untasted, from my lips. To many this may appear strange ; to the men of eighty, who have found no difficulty in persuading to accompany them to the hymeneal altar the blooming beauties of eighteen—and to those who consider the term ‘wife’ as synonymous with woman, and who understand nothing more by woman than a female with a large fortune, or a female with a bewitching smile, a love-speaking eye, or an enchanting foot, my assertion will appear incredible. To obtain a wife is, in their view, the easiest thing in nature. But the facility with which I often saw the most foolish and the basest of men unite themselves to women, distinguished by intelligence, beauty, and even virtue, so far from animating me in my matrimonial scheme, proved an insuperable barrier to my success, by exciting a frigid caution not

at all congenial with the ardour of love.—It was ever my wish, that the wife of my choice should love me for myself alone—that she should receive me into her affections—not because I was an individual belonging to such a class of my species, or filling such a station in society—but on account of those peculiar qualities of intelligence and moral character by which I was distinguished from the rest of my fellow-creatures, and which would attract her regard, though I had nothing of an adventitious nature to recommend me.”

“ An ideal form, at this moment, glides before my imagination. The eloquent countenance, the modest mien, the soul adorned with every charm, exhibit to my view all that is estimable in woman. The figure is precisely such as my boyish fancy drew, but the character has improved with my years. It first appeared before me in all the sensibility of the heart ; for such a character was best adapted to the ardour of youthful feeling. Now the eye beams equally with intelligence—now it is invested with all the dignity of moral virtue, associated with all the sweetness of divine philosophy. Stripped of whatever is

romantic, it now possesses a character of greatness to resist the temptations of the world, of magnanimity to sustain its evils, of energy, guided by principle and softened by feminine grace, which qualifies it to discharge all the duties of social life. With these varied excellencies, I see something of human infirmity to excite my sympathy, of error to call forth my forbearance. This pleasing phantom of a waking dream, is Eve with a fallen nature in a fallen world, and not Eve in Paradise, adorned with original and spotless purity; yet to that original purity she is approximating. I trace her progress with delight through the diversified scenes of the present state of existence. —I feel elevated by her example; her resignation teaches me submission;—her exertions inspire me with activity. Such is the creature of my imagination.”

“Once, indeed, such lovely visions glorified the earth. Before these degenerate days, in the times in which Milton lived, there were women who, when compared with the most exalted females of the present age, appear to have belonged to a higher class of beings. Behold the wife and biographer of Colonel

Hutchinson, and say, if the creature of my fancy is indeed an ‘airy nothing.’ But let it not be supposed, that I expected to see in every woman a Mrs. Hutchinson; or that I was ever vain enough to believe that a woman, with a mind so comprehensive, or with a person so enchanting, would fall to my lot. No! I could have made considerable abatement as to intellect and beauty, but not an *iota* as to delicacy of sentiment, mental culture, and moral and religious excellence. I never desired that women should be educated to be heroines, but to be wives; yet it was always my wish, that their minds should be so enriched, their principles so good, so vital, so dignifying, that if the necessity of circumstances demanded it, the wife should rise into the heroine. Women of this description are not the growth of such a state of society as the present; and were it possible to produce them, there would not be found ‘helps-meet’ for them. That lofty air of manhood which once characterised our British youth, no longer exists. There is, among us, an abundance of talent, but a dearth of genius.—In general, scarcely the appearance

of virtue—and only here and there a solitary and derided instance of its reality—and this reality wearing a hue so sickly, that such women as Mrs. Hutchinson would blush to own it. The giants have disappeared, and we are over-run with a race of pigmies—I beg pardon; a race of Dandies.”

“ This will, in a great degree, account for the debasement of the female character. There is, in most men, little that they can respect ; little that has a tendency to raise them to that mental elevation and moral purity after which they would naturally aspire, and which, in other circumstances, they might easily attain. A desire to captivate and please, is a sort of instinct in the female heart ; and where education does not impart to her those noble principles of virtue which will check this propensity where it is improper, and hallow it where it ought to be indulged, it becomes the surest snare by which woman is debased and enslaved.”

How far this uncourteous harangue might have extended, and with what sallies of wit and ridicule it would have been followed, we have no means of ascertaining ; for just at the moment when the last sentence was

uttered, a loud, shrill, and most inharmonious clamour of voices, as of furies in the act of "civil bickering," excited the surprise of the listeners and the speaker. They hastened to the spot whence the ungracious sounds appeared to issue; when, to their no small astonishment, a brace of dowagers, the wife of a citizen, and a harridan of fashion were accusing each other of not having deposited their stakes at the commencement of a game of whist, which, to the great chagrin of the winners, were found to be deficient. Each solemnly protested that the fraud was not chargeable upon her.

We cannot pollute our pages with the epithets which were bandied to and fro on the occasion. Various fragments of private scandal were mingled with the most harsh and unfeminine invectives. Recrimination growing darker every moment, heightened the interest of the conflict, which seemed fast approaching to personal outrage; when, fortunately, one of the lovely combatants casting her eye on the floor, beheld the glittering cause of the *fracas* which had swelled their gentle bosoms into a tempest of rage, and rendered them a fertile source of amuse-

ment to crowds of malicious spectators. The *amende honorable* was awkwardly made: the storm subsided into a calm, and the company gradually diminished.

Emily, escorted by her beaux, was among the latest departures; just as she was preparing to step to her carriage, a new incident occurred, and a new object presented itself to her view. A wretched female of that class “whose nightly earnings are their daily bread,” was seen struggling with the watchman who was attempting to apprehend her; she maintained the unequal contest with all the strength she possessed, but soon vanquished, was thrown with dreadful violence on the pavement, and fell senseless at the feet of Emily. Alarmed at the dismal spectacle before her, yet feeling for the unhappy creature (in whom she beheld the degradation of her sex) the tenderest pity, she could not resist the first generous impulse of her heart; and, regardless of the sneers of the *beaux*, and the affected terror of the *belles*, she instantly interposed with the Cerberus of the night:—“Save her,” she exclaimed, “she is hurt—she is much hurt; do not take her to prison—lead her

where she will be kindly treated, and I will reward you for your pains." The man fixed his eye for a moment on the golden bribe which glittered in the hand of Emily ; then, loosing his iron grasp, and relaxing somewhat from his insolence of office, replied, " I *vont* hurt the *wretch*, if you *vishes* it, Ma'am ; but it is not often as a lady, like your Ladyship, will stoop to take notice of *sich varmint*." " Come," said Emily, addressing the hapless object of her solicitude, " rise, if you can, and go with this person ; he will not hurt you—for my sake he will not."

The wretched creature made an effort to rise ; and, lifting up her head, disclosed a set of features which, though wan and emaciated, were still interesting, and had once been beautiful ; while the gentility of her form, and the correctness of her language, bespoke her one who " had looked on better days, and known what 'twas to pity and be pitied."—Now, alas ! the tone of compassion seemed strange to her ; so strange, indeed, that it awoke emotions long since dead in her soul. " Young lady," she exclaimed, raising her languid head, and

clasping her wasted hands, "you are an angel from heaven;—and can you feel pity, and for such a wretch?—I was once, like you, in innocence and peace—but what am I now?—Now," with dreadful emphasis she shrieked, "I am a fiend, and life is made a hell, on purpose to torment me!" Emily shrunk instinctively from the horror of her expressions, and again commending her to the care of the watch, whose attentions she promised still further to reward, withdrew to her carriage.

During this scene, Dormer was observed to retire into the crowd, as if to elude the eye of the distressed object in whose misery Emily discovered so deep an interest.—When, however, the poor creature had moved onward a few paces, he stepped up to the carriage—complimented Miss Thornhill on the sympathy she had shown, and promised himself to take care that the watchman performed his duty—and that in the morning he would make some efforts for the permanent relief of the sufferer. "He believed," he said, "there was a place at the other end of the town which they put these people in, to read sermons and sing

psalms all day long ;—did not know to a certainty, but conjectured this to be the case. However, his aunt Dorothy, who was an old maid and a methodist, must know all about it, for she was always going about to such places, and giving away the family-money to the evangelical parsons ; and though he had not seen her these dozen years, he would certainly call on her the first thing in the morning, and arrange the affair, if possible, to Emily's satisfaction." Emily thanked him for his offer, by a kind and gentle pressure of the hand, which thrilled through his frame. She then took a last look of the retiring unfortunate,—trembled as she viewed her—thought, for the first time that evening, of the absent Louisa—sunk into a reverie, suggested by the contrast of such reflections as these, with the gay and splendid scenes in which she had been just exhibiting, and waving with her hand a farewell which she was unable to speak, was driven to her home.

The remarks of her associates of both sexes who witnessed this scene, we shall spare our readers ; suffice it to say, the

exquisite observed in its own inimitable manner, "that the creature *wath* a regular *nuithanth*," while the theatrical declared, "that her action was suitable and her attitude fine; but her voice was broken and hollow, and would never do for the stage."

C H A P. VIII.

“ But who, alas! can love and then be wise?”

“ A little still she strove, and much repented ;

“ And whispering ‘ I will ne’er consent,’—consented.”

Byron.

“ WHO can resist their fate?” exclaimed Emily, when on the ensuing morning she ruminated on the incidents of the ball, and dwelt with dangerous interest on the person, the gaiety, and elegance of Dormer. She had long and seriously repelled his particular attentions. For, to herself she referred, when she carelessly informed Louisa that love was among the captain’s waking dreams. At that period she deemed him a frivolous, if not a selfish pretender, to a passion which she believed it impossible he could ever feel. And the contemptuous *badinage* of Louisa agreeing with this opinion, she was confirmed in her

reiterated rejection of his addresses. Yet, in spite of the conviction of her judgment, and the repugnance of her feelings, Dormer insensibly grew upon her. Cheerful, frank, and *debonnair*, to a girl of Emily's vivacity of temper, he was always an agreeable companion. Being on intimate terms with all her friends and acquaintances, she was incessantly meeting him; and as they both excelled in the accomplishment of dancing, they were frequently thrown together as partners. Of these circumstances Dormer well knew how to take advantage. Piqued at being so often repulsed, he was resolved, if possible, to win the prize; and as he was no stranger to the heart of woman, he felt assured, that if he could once lull suspicion asleep, and awaken the least interest in his favour, whether of pity or gratitude, that his success would be certain. Of Emily's wit he was sufficiently apprised, and he was well acquainted with the generous tenderness of her disposition. With the hope of exciting the one, he was willing to expose himself to the artillery of the other; and the method he adopted proved that he was an able tactician in the *art* of love.

His flattery was delicate, and administered at the very moment when the craving appetite of female vanity was yearning to receive it; that is, on occasions when it wanted the opinion of another to sustain its own almost vanquished complacency. If any doubt occurred in Emily's mind on the subject of a rival's dress or accomplishments, and her fluttering heart betrayed its secret in an anxious glance, Dormer instinctively felt the appeal which he seemed not to observe; and, by a well-timed compliment on the very point at issue, restored the jealous fair one to a tranquil consciousness of her own superiority. Most assiduous in his endeavours to anticipate her wishes and to consult her taste, without re-urging his suit, or even hinting at the subject of his attachment which, in deference to Emily's repeated declarations that "she could never think of him," he appeared desirous rather to conceal than to obtrude: her unsuspecting heart was touched with what she considered a refinement of delicacy,—which, from time immemorial, has been deemed by all competent judges, an unequivocal evidence of the purity and ardour of love.

It is true she had many sad misgivings. This appearance of delicacy might be assumed: it implied to be real, something romantic in the character, something foreign from the heartlessness of fashion, and that destitution of sentiment which, on other occasions, her adorer had been known to boast of as a virtue.

In addition to this, he had a reputation for gallantry—that is, he was a rake; yet his heart was good.—He was kind to all about him—after all, he might be sincere; and it was in the power of love to work a miracle of reformation. It had often converted a debauched lover into a devoted and faithful husband.—Besides, he was not worse than others; and his very frankness of disposition was a guarantee for his superiority to every thing mean and base.—His connexions were high; his family, noble; and he stood in his own person at no great distance from the peerage. With all this,—he was a general favourite; and why should she refuse to unite her destiny with a man whose alliance so many women of distinction were ambitious to obtain?—His faults, too, were those of his age and rank in society, but he had

personal accomplishments and virtues which redeemed them all.

On this important question, Emily argued as all persons do who transfer the reasoning faculty from the head to the heart—who suffer their feelings to dictate to their judgment. She also laboured under another and very serious disadvantage. Her ideas of virtue and vice, and their influence on the happiness of human life, were exceedingly vague and confused. Contemplating this subject only in one point of view, she had adopted the common maxim of the world, that “the standard of virtue ought not to be applied with equal rigour to both sexes.” According to this maxim, Chastity in the one is indispensable; the imputation of it in the other is a disgrace. It is scandalous for clergymen and ladies to intrigue; but if a man of fashion has not the reputation of being gay, he is distrusted as a Joseph Surface, or ridiculed as a Tony Lumpkin; in other words, he is reproached as a hypocrite, or despised as an idiot. Women must be pure, but men may be indulged in what are termed “little sinnings in love,”—a phrase which, however gaily quoted by

the execrable seducer and the lenient censors of his crime, has a dreadfully emphatic meaning when it happens to fall on the ears of heart-broken parents, weeping over the moral wreck of all they held dear and lovely upon earth. It is only in the code of fashion, that one of the most destructive vices of human nature is palliated and considered venial. For every man, in the eye of the Divine Law, who by incontinence offends against the sacred rights of humanity,—and every act of incontinence is such an offence,—is either a SEDUCER or THE ABETTOR OF SEDUCTION.

But however lax the notions of fashionable females may be on the general subject of sexual purity, a woman of real delicacy cannot help feeling a little apprehensive terror, when she seriously thinks of uniting herself for ever to a man who has been familiar with a plurality of attachments—who is a libertine from habit and from principle—and in whose eyes the whole sex are degraded into mere victims of caprice, or objects of licentious passion. She must be far gone in selfishness, and fashion must have deadened all the sensibilities of her heart,

if she can regard matrimony as no more than a cold compact of convenience ; and even then it is a dangerous venture, to commit health, fortune, and reputation to the care of a profligate, the business of whose life is, to ruin the peace of families, and to spread immoral contagion through the whole sphere of his influence. But where the bosom is tenderly alive to impression—where, notwithstanding all the factitious pleasures of the world—it longs for domestic repose, for some arm of fond affection on which to lean, and which can afford it in every hour of weakness and danger, support and protection ; how inexpressibly appalling is the thought of surrendering every hope and every joy to a being who has no constancy in his nature—who lives on excitement, and to whom the endearments of yesterday's love are like a “ tale that is told,”—faintly pleasing in the recollection, but never to be repeated with the same interest or heard with the same emotion.

Emily, perhaps, was placed at an equal distance from regarding marriage as a mere matter of calculation, and from viewing it as

a perfect union of hearts, sympathies and joys. She had outlived the period when "love's morning-beam first shone on the horizon of her existence, and tinged every object with its glow." Once, indeed, she felt, that her being was absorbed in that of another, and that there was no use of existence but to devote it to him. But this fondly cherished hope of early affection had been blighted by the treachery of its object. Under the corrosions of disappointment she had rushed with delirious ardour into the vortex of amusement; and this it was which confirmed the frivolity of her character. Her happiness was no longer to be entrusted to the frailty of one creature; it was henceforth to seek its enjoyment in gaiety, in dissipation, in a round of thoughtless folly. The world had done much in sophisticating her feelings, in impressing its own image upon her heart. Still, however, she possessed the desire of being loved; still she could appreciate and reward genuine affection. She knew too much of life, indeed, to expect either romantic ardour or faultless purity in a lover of modern days; all that she looked for in a husband, was preference,

and an affectionate desire to promote her happiness in the way she liked best, allowing her to select her pleasures, and, if he chose, to participate in them.

In the exterior of Dormer, and in the space he occupied in the circles of fashion, there was much to gratify that passion for admiration which she delighted to indulge. But his habits, his pursuits, and his constant associates, all conspired to impress her with the conviction, that his love was rather a whim than a passion; and that marriage was only one among his thousand expedients to relieve the monotony of existence. This conviction was, however, often shaken by considerations similar to those already detailed. Persuaded at length that he *could* love, her vanity soon assured her of the sincerity of his professions.—This excited a little of her compassion; but she had so often said, that Dormer was the last man she could ever think of marrying—and that a union with him was as impossible as any imaginable impossibility in nature—that she felt no danger in the pity with which she regarded his disappointment. Her mind was so perfectly made up on the subject,

that instead of avoiding him she was delighted to let the world see how superior she was to the artillery of love, when directed by one whom she could treat with all the familiarity of indifference.

This very circumstance, as almost any novice might have foreseen, produced an impression different from that which she intended. Her name was so often associated with Dormer's, and they were talked of as destined for each other in so many morning visits and evening parties, that Emily almost began to feel, that what she at first deemed impossible might be probable. Having been accustomed to the tones of his voice, his manner, and the delicate services he appeared so happy to render, if these were suspended for a week, or even a day, as sometimes happened, discontent clouded her brow. Her maid was chided even when she took the greatest pains to please, and she returned from routs and balls, out of humour with herself and all that she had seen. When, however, Dormer re-appeared, her complacency returned: Gertrude was caressed, and every party was delightful. Still Dormer could never be her husband.

Had she not peremptorily rejected him?—Certainly.

With Gertrude she had discussed the point so often, and had made such repeated references to this her irrevocable decision, that she seemed perfectly fortified against any renewed attack which her lover might presume to meditate. Gertrude, however, was not long in discovering what Emily took such marvellous pains to hide even from herself. Her very anxiety to be thus fortified soon convinced her observant waiting-woman that the citadel was in danger. Whenever, therefore, she wished to propitiate her mistress's regard, she never failed to espouse the cause of Dormer, and to descant on all that she could imagine favourable in his character, and charming in his person. On these occasions Emily heard her with a satisfaction she could ill conceal; and though she suggested many objections, they appeared to be only urged for the purpose of eliciting a voluble and successful refutation. Such a refutation was always ready; and when her auditor declared herself still unconvinced, and gently desired her never again to mention Dormer's name, the wily Abigail usually

ended the conference by observing, that she verily believed there was a fate in these things—that marriages were made in heaven—that what was to be must be—and that she could not help thinking Miss Emily and Captain Dormer would make the handsomest couple in England.

Absurd as this popular notion of fate undoubtedly is, because it paralyses the human agent, and throws the spell of uncontrollable necessity around his volitions, destroying at once his accountableness, and impeaching the wisdom and goodness of the supreme Governor of the World—yet, it is the usual refuge of weakness, when the heart can no longer sophisticate and pervert the understanding. “It is a step, on the propriety of which I dare not consult my judgment (says the hesitating victim of blind attachment). I should certainly reprobate it in another, but it is my destiny; I cannot avoid it if I would.” It is thus we confound Divine and human agency, when we ought to distinguish them, and to remember that, while the Almighty permits folly, and its inevitable consequence misery, and overrules both for the ultimate happiness of his children, yet

that neither is the direct and immediate ordination of his providence. He is the Father of Lights (of knowledge and wisdom), from whom cometh every good and perfect gift; but he bestows upon none of his creatures a debauched husband, or a termagant wife. We procure these benefits to ourselves. The Deity suffers our infatuation to become our punishment; and, if our guilt and obstinacy prevent not, educes from it the richest good a perverse and selfish mortal can receive from the hands of a wise and beneficent Creator; but it forms no part of his arrangements. He is not the author of evil—it is repugnant to his nature; and he either sternly tramples upon it by his power, or mercifully subdues it by his grace. Let no erring, weak and deluded child of humanity, then, rush into a connexion for life that is equally condemned by prudence and religion, and imagine he is fulfilling a previous destiny—a destiny with which his own volitions and passions have nothing to do. Let no one who is thus tempted, though by a being in the semblance of an angel of light, presume to say, he is tempted of God.

It is certain, that an indefinable idea of necessity operated in the heart of Emily just in proportion as her reason condemned, and her affections approved, the addresses of Dormer. This was the state of her mind when he accompanied her to Mrs. Gainham's. At that moment the slightest circumstances were able to turn the scale completely in his favour ; and of these more than *quantum sufficit* was supplied in the silent looks of rapture with which he frequently gazed upon her,—in the style and spirit with which he supported her in the dance,—in the mute admiration, accompanied by a starting tear, with which he listened to her song, without joining in the loud applause at its conclusion ;—and, above all, the generous interest which he appeared to take in the poor unfortunate, whose piercing shrieks had filled her with horror, pleaded most powerfully in his behalf. She had wronged him. He had a heart, or why should he pity the ruined and the lost—and why should he tremble when she gently pressed his hand—what could thus agitate him but the feeling response of tender sympathy ? Ruminating on all the incidents of the evening,

which crowded upon her imagination, she retired to rest. How charming were her dreams ! Dormer rose to her view, clothed in every attribute with which affection delights to invest its object. His manly figure, the ærial grace with which he moved, and the mild benignity of his countenance when he stepped forth as the guardian angel of the fallen and the wretched, endeared him to her heart. It was the Dormer of her fancy—her *beau ideal*, breathing its plastic energy into the soul, and giving its unrivalled perfection to the form of him, whom, in sleep alone, she allowed herself to love.

In the morning she arose to give her waking thoughts to the images of the night,—to dream again in reverie. Having consumed full two hours in this intoxicating employment, she brought herself once more round to the point of destiny.¹

As if directed by his good genius, Dormer, at this critical juncture, was announced. The wrinkles of thought were on his brow—

“ Frons læta parum, et dejecto lumina vultu.”

VIRGIL.

There was also a careless negligence in his dress, which betrayed unusual absence. In

fine, his manner was altogether that of a person labouring under some oppressive calamity. Emily, greatly shocked at this sudden change in his appearance from the gay levity of the preceding evening, and anxious to learn the cause, darted the keen penetration of her inquisitive eye into his inmost soul. The silent sorrow which seemed to overwhelm the sufferer, thus interrogated, soon became eloquent. Emily listened with new emotions to the thrice-told tale of love, now no longer flippant, and uttered in a tone of provoking *non-chalance*, but struggling to escape from a heart profoundly agitated, for which the world had no charms, and life no solace, without her smiles—without herself.

* * * * *

Whoever listened to the tones of passion without feeling their thrilling potency? What woman ever pitied a lover's distress without experiencing its infection? But was Dormer then really in earnest? Was his indeed the distinguished privilege to wear the crown of love and friendship, that

“————— Sits high

“Upon the forehead of humanity.”

Could his eyes drink in the influence
of that

“ ——— Orbed drop
“ Of light,”

which genders a novel sense, “and melts the very soul into its radiance?” Oh, no! his was not a nature to feel such “rich entanglement.” In the noblest sense of the word, he could not love; yet he was for the moment sincere. Hypocrisy will sometimes drop its mask, and at length believe its oft-repeated fiction. Without knowing what love could mean, Dormer persuaded himself that he was subdued by its all-conquering power; and he succeeded in imparting the same conviction to the heart of Emily. The perturbation of his mind, and the sadness, bordering on anguish, depicted in his looks, was not, however, entirely the effect of his imaginary passion.

The last spectacle of the preceding night, awakened, even in his callous bosom, something like remorse. In the imploring victim of despair, at the feet of Emily, he beheld one of the many wretched beings whom he had seduced from the paths of innocence

and peace. Even he was shocked at the contrast between her appearance when he first saw her, the pride of the village where he plotted her destruction, and the appalling misery which had now imprinted its cold and sickening characters on her withered form and haggard countenance. The circumstances of her ruin all flashed upon his remembrance in a moment. He saw, in the shrinking self-accuser, his own base handy-work. He had paled the roses on that cheek—he had scared peace from her halcyon nest in that bosom—he had given to vice and to infamy one of the fairest of the daughters of men. Confiding in his truth, making him all her world, in evil hour, at his insidious persuasion, she wandered from the home of affection ; forsook her father and her mother to repose in love's elysium, to be the idol (so she vainly imagined) of one whose passionate fondness could never grow weary of its object ; who had sworn inviolable attachment, with eyes so eloquently tender, with accents so tremulously soft, that she could not choose, but yield her destiny to his protection. Enamoured of his prey, for a few short months, he watched over her with

jealous anxiety. Not a friend, not a companion, would he suffer to approach her. Charmed with his fond, his unwearied attentions, the infatuated girl never once felt the loss of character, nor could she permit her imagination to dwell upon former scenes of domestic endearment, which blind affection had well nigh effaced from her memory. Her life was a delirium—she was absorbed in the joyous present, and was equally reckless of the past and the future.

At length, sated with his victim, and possessing neither the courage nor the generosity to reveal the sad truth to her whom he still affected to adore, he basely introduced to her the most depraved of her own sex, and their equally profligate paramours, with the sole view of debauching her mind, and ensnaring her into some act of indiscretion, which might afford him a plausible pretext for abandoning her. The opportunity he thus created and sought, soon occurred, and he left her penniless and friendless. From one gradation of infamy to another, the miserable creature sunk—nor had her fate excited a pang, or an inquiry, from her heartless seducer, till he saw her in

the hands of the watchman, and heard the lovely Emily plead so earnestly in her behalf.

Dreading a discovery, and anxious to remove her beyond the possibility of another interview, he lost no time in calling upon his aunt Dorothy, upon whom the reader will recollect he had charged two equally intolerable abominations—namely, those of being an “old maid,” and a “Methodist.”

To the first, she must have undoubtedly pleaded guilty; the second, it is probable, would have been as unintelligible to herself as it was to her accuser. She was, in fact, a maiden lady, who had considerably passed the meridian of life. Early intimacy with some of the brightest ornaments of piety, which, about half a century ago, adorned the higher ranks of female society, and shed a lustre on the Church of England, had given a decided turn to her character, and had placed her above the dissipation of the fashionable world at an age when she might have been expected to delight in its amusements. The companion of Miss Talbot, of Mrs. Carter, and of Hannah More, she preferred the grave pursuits of literature, and the calm and tranquil pleasures of religion. Her un-

derstanding was vigorous and cultivated, and she was rather distinguished by the accuracy of her judgment, than the fervour of her imagination : she seldom wandered into the regions of fancy, yet in her heart there dwelt the genial warmth of benevolence. Her character combined two qualities not often found in the same individual—activity and preciseness. Punctual to a moment, and precise to a minutia, she also displayed an amazing energy in behalf of every cause which she espoused. The former was natural to her disposition ; but the latter was superinduced by principle alone—it was, therefore, noiseless, unobtrusive, and equable—it was not an ebullition ; but a calm, majestic intensity, selecting and employing the best means to accomplish the best purposes—it was neither blind nor obstinate, selfish nor injurious—it was the light of the mind, shedding its lustre on the heart, and the glow of the heart, thus excited, mingling itself with the light of the mind. She was, in fact, governed by religion ; but it was the religion which sanctified her reason, and expanded her affections. She was more devout than opinionative. Two things, alas !

sadly prevalent among what are generally called Methodists, she utterly detested, namely, *scandal* and *cant*. She loved her fellow creatures too well to libel their characters, or to expose their infirmities. Her object was, to do good, and she delighted to serve God by the active service of mankind. Her large fortune was, therefore, consecrated to charitable and religious institutions; but she was her own almoner—she was on every committee where she could be usefully employed without compromising the delicacy of her sex.

Her time was devoted—every portion of it had its allotted duties, and its appropriate pleasures—she truly lived, and therefore she enjoyed life. One of her favourite objects had been for many years, to lessen the sum of guilt and misery among that portion of her own sex, which all the world have doomed to hopeless infamy. With intense perseverance, she laboured to erect, for the reception of the penitent of this wretched class, a house of mercy—a hospital for the heart;—at last she succeeded, and can relate many an affecting tale of the triumphs of humanity and religion over misery and vice. Surprised

at the visit of her nephew, whom she had not seen during a very long interval, and more astonished still at the nature of his business, she yet received him with the utmost kindness ; and little suspecting that he was induced to apply to her on such a subject from any other motive than humanity, she readily promised that his request should be granted. It was immediately after this interview that Dormer waited upon Emily to convey to her this grateful intelligence, and to make his grand *coup de main* upon her heart—with what success, the chronicles of the day in a few weeks announced to the world.

C H A P. IX.

“ O give me, from this heartless scene releas’d,
Whatever tones and melancholy pleasures
The things of Nature utter ; birds or trees,
Or moan of ocean gale in weedy caves.”—*Coleridge*.

“ Toccando un poco la vita futura.”

WHILE gaiety, dissipation, fantastic joys, and worldly hopes occupied the heart of her friend ; Louisa Delaval, estranged from them all, and labouring under the most painful depression of spirits, was yet in a far safer condition. She had less real cause for anxiety, and the state of her mind was, on the whole, favourable to her happiness. The victim of the world may for a season appear to possess an immense advantage over the votary of religion ; but the bright prospects of the one, are soon shrouded in perpetual darkness—while the gloom of the other

gradually melts into the radiance of eternal sunshine. But to religion, as a principle of duty, and a source of enjoyment, Louisa was, at the time of her correspondence with Emily, and for a considerable period afterwards, a total stranger. She was divorced from vanity, but she was not reconciled to God. We cannot make an immediate transit from earth to heaven. The pleasures of religion are not at the instant command of the satiated worldling. He must pass through a baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire, before he can enjoy the unutterable peace.

Religious knowledge is not intuitive ; it must be sought by patient inquiry, and the humility of faith. True devotion does not take full possession of the heart, until it has long and often breathed earnest supplications into the ear of the Most Holy. To its attainment, many impediments are raised by the depravity of our nature ; and where the understanding is cultivated, and the taste refined, by the degrading associations of religious profession, with the littleness, the selfishness, and the hypocrisy, of the world. The dark citadel of ignorance, aided by corrupt principles, and a sensualized heart,

cannot easily be vanquished by the light of heavenly truth. Thus supported, it will maintain a stubborn conflict with its brightest evidences and mightiest claims. And if the intellectual character of the individual be lofty and imaginative, if his idea of religion be that of a pure and divine essence, identifying the soul with its own glorious nature, he feels himself utterly repulsed by the debasing mediums through which this superlative excellence in vain endeavours to display its overpowering majesty and enchanting loveliness. By a strange perversion of the understanding, he supposes, because the doctrines of the Christian verity do not always impart with their consolations the sublimity of their abstract character, that they are therefore beneath his consideration and unworthy of his belief.

To the mind of Louisa, as yet, religion had no difficulties. The far distant temple rose in indistinct and awful grandeur before her imagination, but she saw nothing of the strange declivity and rugged ascent which guarded its approach. All expectation of happiness from her former pursuits she had slowly, but completely relinquished. Far-

ther than this she had not advanced—this is evident, from the subjoined effusion, which, in a solitary hour, and in melancholy mood, she addressed

TO HOPE.

SWEET HOPE ! whose beauteous ray
Illumes the mourner's way,
And shines amidst the gloom of saddest night ;
Thy cheering beams impart
To this desponding heart,
Which darkness shrouds, and boding fears affright.

The richest boon of heaven,
In mercy thou wer't given,
To gild the future with thy glorious dreams ;
The magic of thy smiles,
Of present woe beguiles,
And gives bewitching life to airy schemes.

In days of early youth,
Confiding in thy truth,
Enchantment threw her spells around my feet ;
Till grave Experience came,
With Reason ; awful name !
And banished from my heart the fond deceit.

They told me, Hope is vain,
The sure presage of pain,
Which yields not homage to their wise behest ;
They chid my follies past,
And bade me seek at last,
Their sober guidance to the port of rest.

Thus chastened, I obey,
Yet Hope must guide my way,
Not the illusive form which Fancy drew ;
But her Experience loves,
And Reason best approves,
Whose charms are real, and her promise true.

It was infinitely to the advantage of Miss Delaval, that just at the moment when a guide and a friend became indispensable to her happiness, she was favoured with the kind and judicious instructions of Mrs. Wilmington. Her acquaintance with this lady appeared to be the effect of chance ; but

“Such chances Providence obey.”

Our most endeared connexions are often formed by the accidental combination of circumstances. We meet an interesting stranger—a kindred spirit animates us—we feel the power of attraction, the attraction of souls—and henceforth the charm is never broken—the stranger becomes a companion, the companion a friend. Something like this was experienced by Mrs. Wilmington and Louisa at their first parting ; they felt a mutual interest in each other’s welfare. The death of her mother had left a void in the heart of the latter—she wanted a mother, and Providence

kindly sent her Mrs. Wilmington. Lady Delaval was no real loss to her daughter ; Mrs. Wilmington was an acquisition, whose worth it was impossible for her to estimate.

During the summer months they often met in the morning ; and in the evening usually walked, sometimes ascending the mountain's height, surveying the expanse of waters, and watching the distant sail as it gradually appeared to sink from their view at the edge of the horizon. At other times they would seek the sylvan recess, wander through rude and unfrequented paths, and, when fatigued, sit down on a rustic seat, to enjoy the fragrance of the wild honeysuckle, while balmy zephyrs played around them, and ocean, with its slow and mournful undulations, murmured at their feet.

There was one delightful, favourite spot, to which they often retired. This was on the skirts of a wood that hung on a promontory overlooking the sea ; on their left, through a tangled vista, they could see nothing but water, and now and then a solitary fishing vessel, which unfurled its white sail to the breeze ; on their right, at some distance, the turrets of a castle, which, though

of modern erection, had all the appearance of ancient and gloomy magnificence, were half revealed amid the trees ; while, in their immediate view, the irregular windings of the shore, strewn with pieces of massive rock, the calm serenity of the ocean, lighted by the mild refulgence of the sinking sun, undisturbed, save by the flitting of the sea fowl on its surface ; and the distant woods of the opposite coast, over the natural duskiness of which twilight was wont to throw a deeper shade (like the gloom of sorrow on the brow of age), afforded a prospect which could not fail to interest the lovers of nature.

Here Mrs. Wilmington and Louisa would sometimes muse, sometimes converse, and often linger “ till the first pale star of evening” warned them to depart. And can it be doubted, that a scene so calculated to excite the fervours of animated piety, frequently led them to talk on this most interesting subject. Astronomy, botany, music, and poetry, were all favourite pursuits of Mrs. Wilmington. In the pleasure afforded by these, she passed many of her leisure hours. But religion was her darling theme ; her chief study was the science

which makes wise to salvation ; on this she was always at home, and the amiable sweetness of her manners added charms to heavenly truth ; when she conversed on this topic, it was as if an angel pleaded the cause of heaven. She was, indeed, distinguished by that “ noble enthusiasm,” kindled at the altar of immortality, “ without which reason has no guide, imagination no object ;” which alone can animate virtue into beauty, and purify the affections, by exalting them to their native region in the heaven of heavens.

A few conversations had informed her of the state of Miss Delaval’s mind—she saw her a lovely, sensible, ingenuous young woman, whom education had misled, and whose heart was corroded with a painful sense of that disappointment which the mere pleasures of the world never fail to occasion, and which the dissipated amusements of fashionable life more especially create. Though a stranger, she felt no common interest in her happiness, and she considered her present dissatisfaction with herself as affording a favourable opportunity to lead her to the fountain of eternal felicity. She observed that her example had some influ-

ence on the conduct of her youthful acquaintance ; but she was convinced that her notions of religion were crude and erroneous, and her method of seeking its consolations such as would not fail, ere long, to disgust her with what she imagined to be a life of devotion.

In the judicious advice and soothing attentions of such a friend, Louisa found something of that tranquillity and calm delight which she had so long sought in vain. One evening, retiring to their usual recess, among a variety of interesting subjects touched upon in conversation, that of the state of departed spirits was introduced. It was suggested by the setting sun. Louisa, on a former occasion, had remarked on the beauty of a similar scene, and embraced the present opportunity of repeating to her friend a poetical thought to which it had given birth. It was thus expressed :

SAY, did ye mark the Sun to-day,
How bursting through his shadowy cloud,
He chas'd the twilight gloom away,
And gilded all his sable shroud?

And then, methought, he lingering stood
To gaze upon the world awhile ;
And ere he sunk beneath the flood,
To bless it with a parting smile.

So, when the Christian's day is past,
'Tis his to chase the twilight gloom,
To shine the brighter at the last,
And shed mild radiance o'er the tomb.

So, when life's well-spent journey o'er,
Lies pictured in the approving breast,
'Tis his the landscape to explore,
And bless the view, and sink to rest.

Mrs. Wilmington, pleased with the devout allusion contained in these lines, and feeling the enthusiasm of the moment (for the sun was then retiring from their view), observed, that the same object, in precisely the same situation, reminded her not only of the Christian's rest, but of his subsequent and immediate immortality. "While yon glorious orb," she said, "seems to set in darkness, he is this very instant "repairing his drooping head," and rising in another hemisphere, to

' Flame in the forehead of the morning sky.'

Thus is he, at this interesting period, not only a beautiful emblem of the last moments of the Christian, but a delightful presage of the glory with which, even in the hour of death, he breaks upon the "new heavens, wherein dwelleth righteousness." After a few moments of pensive silence, in which a train of

mournful reflections was evidently passing in the mind of Louisa, she remarked, " Since the death of my dear mother, I have often wearied myself with conjectures respecting the unseen world. If, indeed, we are immortal,—and of this reason itself almost assures us, and nature speaks in our hearts,—what a mystery hangs over our destiny! The future is an awful state—an impenetrable veil conceals it from our view, nor can we conceive how they exist, nor what are their employments who have left our world for ' that bourne whence no traveller returns.' It is a subject in which the mind is lost, and I often dread the approach of the solemn hour when the secret shall be disclosed."

Mrs. Wilmington did not check what some may be disposed to call the melancholy of her friend. She did not dismiss the subject as one too serious to engage the attention of youth and loveliness; but as it was a theme in unison with the feelings of her heart, and one on which she often reflected with ineffable delight, she replied, " Indeed, my dear, the future is an awful state; but in the Scriptures it rises to our

view in something like definite and alluring majesty. The sun of Revelation pours its radiance on the path of immortality, and often, while gazing upon the enrapturing prospect, a holy impatience seizes on my soul. I am eager to flee away, to walk the golden streets, to hear the strains of bliss, to join the society of angels, and to drink for ever from the river of life. Heaven," she added, with a sigh, "has peculiar attractions to me. There are beings there who look down upon me with eyes of fascination, and it would be impious were I to wish the charm dissolved. Human sympathy, maternal fondness, indeed, powerfully, too powerfully, attach me to the earth ; but the glorious departed, whose train of blessed light revealed to me, as they entered the celestial mansions, the unutterable grandeur of their destiny, seem to reproach me from their thrones, when I linger and loiter in a world, from which I ought for ever to feel myself estranged. On the most enchanting spot, in the original Eden itself, could I discover it, I could not dare to build a tabernacle. It is not good for *me* to be here; yet do I not repine. I am a wearied pilgrim ; but I ask not for premature

repose 'the time my God appoints is best.' We shall meet, my dear Louisa, I fondly hope, we shall meet when the days of our mourning are ended, in the regions of immortal love and joy."

"To be happy in the future world should be our business and our object in the present. The danger to which thoughtless mortals are exposed, is most tremendous; and the grand inquiry for each of us ought to be, shall I be happy when my body is mouldering in the tomb?" "Is there, then, any doubt, my dear madam," said Louisa, greatly agitated, "respecting the HAPPINESS of the future state? It never once occurred to me, that there *could* be the least uncertainty on *this* point. My anxieties concerning another world have arisen from its concealment, from a latent fear, that death, after all, might be annihilation, and that the soul and the body had no separate existence. Do you believe, that any of the sons and daughters of men will ever be miserable after they quit this scene of care and disappointment? Surely, the last hope, the great compensation for earthly trial, and the terrors of the grave—the hope that settles on the

bright realities of an after paradise, cannot be implanted in the human heart, only to aggravate its positive misery by an eternal sense of loss and privation. Is not the Creator just and good—and can it be consistent with these perfections of his nature, to doom any of his creatures to the horrors of hopeless despair? I have attended to the duties of religion, in order to obtain from them relief for the sorrows of the present life; but it is to me a new and a shocking thought, that my immortal happiness is questionable.”

While Louisa, trembling with apprehension, urged these inquiries, tears of pity and affection stole down the cheeks of her friend. “It is, my dear,” she replied, “a painful and a humiliating truth, which the Bible declares and universal experience confirms, that human nature is not what it was when it proceeded from the hand of its Creator. We are fallen, and as the Scripture expresses, ‘conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity;’ we are fallen, sinful creatures, and in this situation are exposed to the penalty of guilt.”

“But this, surely, is not the state of *all* mankind,” said Louisa; “there are many amiable,

cellent persons, like yourself, who are certainly free from this charge ; and is it, my dear madam, really possible that any creature can be so guilty as to deserve misery in a future state ?”

“ I do not wonder, my lovely friend,” said Mrs. Wilmington, “ I do not wonder that you, who, by your education, have had no opportunity of considering this important subject, should be so much surprised at a doctrine which is too true, and which it is the constant endeavour of the world to forget, or to disbelieve. The Bible, which you do not question to be the word of God, you have read but little, and perhaps never with a conviction, that it was to teach you that which it infinitely concerns you to know. The Bible, a book so unfashionable in the circles where you have been accustomed to move, gives the most affecting, and just description of the state of all mankind, without exception. This Bible assures us, that there is none that doeth good and sinneth not ; and if the most amiable and virtuous individual that ever lived, will compare his motives, principles, and actions, with the law of God, he will find that the decision of

the Scripture is an incontrovertible truth. That it is possible for creatures to commit sin so as to deserve to be exposed to the wrath of God, from which, of themselves, they can never escape, you will be fully convinced when you apply your mind to the study of this important subject."

"But," interrupted Louisa, for her anxiety greatly increased, "you do not mean, my respected friend, I am sure you do not mean to say, supposing this to be the case, that there is no way to escape from Divine wrath—our condition is not hopeless?" "No, my dear," immediately rejoined her friend, "the adorable God, whom we have all offended, and who is so justly displeased with us, has himself revealed to our hearts a hope full of immortality. He saw us guilty and miserable; and, to use the pathetic language of an inspired prophet, 'when there was no eye to pity, and no arm to save, his own arm brought salvation.'

The same book, which unfolds to us a knowledge of our hopeless condition, as culprits in the hands of the Avenger, reveals also the glorious way of salvation, and leads us to 'the Lamb of God,

which taketh away the sin of the world.' What is meant by this, an application to the sacred volume will soon inform you. We will talk more largely on this subject when we meet again. See, the orb of day sheds his last ray of golden lustre, as he sinks below the ocean. The smooth wave in silence flows, and affords an interesting picture of the religious mind. Calm and serene as this delightful evening ; smooth and unruffled as yonder expanse of water is the bosom which enjoys 'the peace of God, which passeth all understanding.' "

As Mrs. Wilmington uttered this pleasing reflection to her listening friend, " twilight stole over the scene," and they passed along in silent musing, till they reached the hermitage. Soon after Mrs. Wilmington took her leave, Louisa retired for the night.

Ruminating on the solemn conversation, and the affectionate solicitude of her friend for her happiness, she took up the Bible with sensations to which she had hitherto been a stranger. The powerful impression seized her mind—it is written by the finger of God—and it is addressed to me ;—she read, she prayed, she wept.

C H A P. X.

“ ————— ’Tis the Bible !
I know and feel it is a blessed book ;
And I remember how it stopp’d my tears
In days of former sorrow ; like some herb
Of sovereign virtue to a wound applied.”—*Wilson*.

“ Let every mother pay back the vast debt she owes to Christ, by instructing her daughters early in his Gospel, by making the knowledge of the Bible the basis of all education, and making it the cupola too—the Alpha and Omega—the first and the last.”—*Maturin*.

THAT religion is incompatible with the general habits and spirit of the world, is in nothing more evident than in the ridicule and contempt with which it visits those who are not ashamed to avow unfeigned attachment to the Holy Scriptures. The miserable may seek every other refuge, they may fly to the intoxicating draught, to obtain temporary relief, or they may bury their sorrows in the eternal oblivion of the grave, and pity will weep over their misfortunes ; but let them once apply to the Bible for support and consolation, and they will infallibly pro-

voke the bitterest scorn. The popery of fashion is, in this instance, as unrelenting and vindictive, as that which is sustained by the thunders of the Vatican, and the terrors of the Inquisition.

The Scriptures may be received with *implicit* faith ; but they must not be read or understood. A distant reverence (to adopt a beautiful allusion) may bow them out of the circle of the human mind ; and we may practise a few genuflexions, and perform a few unmeaning ceremonies before the altar of the *unknown God* ; but not a ray of spiritual intelligence must penetrate into our souls—not one of the truths of salvation must be brought into contact with our hearts. Such is the decree ;—and it is not too much to affirm, that fashionable Christians, as they are strangely denominated, are as little acquainted with the oracles of the Christian faith, as the Esquimaux, who never heard that such oracles are in existence.

But why this stern edict against the Bible ? What evil has it done ? Is it a volume of fictions ? No. This would ensure its cordial reception. If the Bible were a

romance, its interesting narratives would delight, its sublime descriptions charm, the more than chivalric benevolence of its principal personage would captivate every mind. It would be the greatest favourite that our circulating libraries could furnish. How then are we to account for its universal abandonment? Is it rejected, because it is true? If the moral government of the Creator, if death, the immortality of the soul, and a future judgment, were only airy dreams, the Scriptures would be hailed as a most valuable treasury, where learning has deposited its stores, genius its splendours, and human nature itself all the amazing phenomena of its mysterious character. But it is the book of God; its narratives—real history; its sublimity—the inspiration of heaven; its most prominent personage—a perfect being, whose whole life forms the most humiliating contrast to the fashion, the vanity, and the viciousness of the world. The votaries of folly, true to their idol, do well to exclude the Bible from their circles. In their pursuits, it is expedient that conscience should be lulled, not roused; that death and judgment should be concealed, not exposed.

They would produce worse effects than the hand-writing on the wall of Belshazzer's palace, were they suffered to obtrude into the ball-room, to appear in *propria persona* on the stage, and to walk without a veil at the masquerade.

It is probable, that the sneer of contempt has already been excited against the hapless Louisa. In the estimation of the daughters of fashion, she has committed the unpardonable sin, for which nothing can atone, and the taint of which no lustrations can ever remove. Be it so. Yet accompany her through the future scenes of her story. As you advance, let this fact be impressed upon your minds—"She read her Bible." Her history may prove an antidote against such weakness, or an incentive to it; who can tell?

The day after Miss Delaval had read the sacred book with so much interest and feeling, was the Sabbath. As soon as she arose, the conversation of the past evening, and the employment of the subsequent hour, were the first things to which her memory recurred. The recollection brought with it the impressions which she then felt; she

began to view her character through a new and by no means a flattering medium.

Her first object was, to examine the standard of truth and virtue presented in the Scriptures, and which is the only legitimate standard with which we are to compare our principles and conduct, our views and pursuits. She soon discovered, that her opinions were erroneous; the motives of her actions defective; and, on other grounds, most objectionable. The mortifying consideration, that with an infallible guide, she had preferred the uncertain, partial, and deluding sentiments of her own erring nature, deeply affected her. She thought it strange, that she should ever have attempted to legislate for herself when she was absolutely amenable to her Creator, to whom she owed unbounded homage, affectionate gratitude, and universal obedience. “How preposterous,” she exclaimed, as she dwelt on this subject, “that I should acknowledge the claims of the Supreme Being, and yet never inquire into their nature and extent; that I should confess my dependence, and yet never feel concern to honour my benefactor by examining and obeying his just re-

quirements." Thus, she felt convinced, that as it respected the Author of her existence, and the Revelation which he had communicated to man, she had been guilty of the most criminal negligence. "He is my Father," she said, "yet I have never read his letters of affectionate solicitude for my welfare ; he is my Sovereign, but I have disregarded his laws ; and while I have professed to obey him, my conduct has been guided by a standard of my own."

With the most painful sensations of contrition for her past unconcern, she sat down once more to peruse the New Testament. To a mind unaccustomed to scriptural ideas, and the train of thought a general knowledge of the facts and doctrines of the Bible usually produces, when any particular portion of it is read, the effect of a first application to its pages is far from being pleasant. Prejudice is alarmed, little information is acquired, and anxiety is rather increased than relieved. Notions and habits of thinking at variance with almost every sentence, prevent a clear apprehension of its meaning, or create repugnance when it is understood. One truth, perceived and admitted, is so interwoven

with many others yet to be learned, that the understanding is confused, and embraces it with trembling reluctance. As a person born blind, and whose eyes have been recently couched, makes many painful and apparently fruitless efforts before he can discern any thing with pleasure, so the individual, who, with an awakened mind, first sits down to a perusal of the Scriptures, feels all the inconveniences of a sudden admission into a scene of “marvellous light.” The time spent in learning to define its various doctrines—to trace their connexion—and to harmonize them into beauty, is an interval of severe and perplexing difficulty. Louisa, however, was prevented in a great degree from experiencing this state of confused embarrassment by falling upon a part of Scripture which exactly accorded with her feelings; and which brought one entire subject under her review. It was the conversation between our blessed Saviour and the Lawyer, in the 10th chapter of St. Luke. The question which the latter proposed to his illustrious teacher she considered to be of immense importance—she had pondered it in her heart; repeatedly had she asked her-

self “ what must I do to inherit eternal life?” But when she learnt the conditions on which it was to be obtained, a paleness like that of death came over her countenance, and the book almost fell from her hands. “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself.” With whatever complacency she might have listened to the dictates of the second table, the demands of the first alarmed and confounded her—she knew that this supreme love to God, which annihilates every consideration of selfishness and independence, was a stranger to her heart. She observed that God required not a transient emotion of gratitude for benefits received, which the mere lovers of pleasure sometimes complacently imagine they do him the honour to feel and to manifest, but that intenseness of affection, that unabating ardour of love which makes the claims of the Deity paramount to all others. She blushed with shame while her conscience told her that she had hitherto lived but for herself; that her very devotion was selfish and formal. Now, she was persuaded, that if eternal life

could be procured on no other condition than this, she certainly had forfeited every claim to it. Under this impression she was anxious to discover whether the divine law relaxed any of its high demands, or mitigated any of its terrors against the guilty. The more she examined, the more strict she discovered its injunctions to be, and that the thunders of heaven were denounced against every offender ; that there was no promise of forgiveness to imperfect and sincere obedience, but that its inexorable language uniformly was, “ the soul that sinneth, it shall surely die.”

Notwithstanding this declaration Miss De-laval felt not the anguish of despair ; though overwhelmed with anxiety she did not see her guilt and unworthiness in all their extent ; for this is a conviction which is not felt until the light of the sun of righteousness guides the transgressor into the way of peace. She resolved, however, to make the attempt to love God, and to serve him perfectly under its all-powerful influence. She determined to be in earnest in religion, and she imagined that repentance for the past, and amendment for the future, would entitle her to the divine

forgiveness ; and that the mercy, if not the justice of God, would acquit her. Thus, ignorant of the righteousness of heaven, and yet properly convinced that righteousness was absolutely necessary to her happiness, she undertook to perform a righteousness for herself ; with what success a subsequent page will disclose.

C H A P. XI.

“ ————— The sweet words
Of Christian promise——
Are muttered o’er by men whose tones proclaim
How flat and wearisome they feel their trade ;
Rank scoffers some ; but most, too indolent,
To deem them falsehoods, or to know their truth.”
Coleridge.

“ Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,
Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,
Paul should himself direct me. I would trace
His master strokes, and draw from his design.
I would express him simple, grave, sincere ;
In doctrine, uncorrupt ; in language, plain ;
And plain in manner ; decent, solemn, chaste,
And natural in gesture ; much impress’d
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
And anxious mainly, that the flock he feeds
May feel it too ; affectionate in look,
And tender in address, as well becomes
The Messenger of Grace to guilty men.
Behold the picture !—Is it like ?”—*Cowper.*

SERIOUSLY persuaded that religion ought to be her first and greatest concern, Miss Delaval went with this impression to

the parish church in the neighbourhood. It was a lovely morning, and so tranquil was the scene, that it diffused a heavenly serenity over her agitated feelings. The voice of rural labour was mute, hush'd was "The plough-boy's whistle, and the milk-maid's song,"—"Calmness sat throned on an unmoving cloud," which seemed to repose in the depth of heaven. Her heart felt the appeal—a tear glistened in her eye as she beheld the touching emblem of peace, the beautiful type of the mind's Sabbath, when it sweetly rests on the bosom of its God.

As she approached the village, the hallowed edifice, standing on a commanding eminence, and brightened by the beams of the morning sun, appeared to smile on the gathering crowds, which, from the town and the adjacent hills, were drawing near its portals; while its cheerful, yet solemn chime conveyed to the imagination the sublime sentiment of the Psalmist, "Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart." Her spirit was awed as she read the carved inscription on the Gothic arch through which she entered: "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Ab-

sorbed in meditation, she sat for several moments unconscious of any presence but that of the Great Being. At length the voice of the clergyman, inviting the children of guilt and sorrow to confess their sins, and to implore forgiveness, first awakened her from her profound and solemn reverie. Her heart was in perfect unison with the penitential address to heaven, which immediately followed ; she felt that she was an erring, wandering sheep, and she acknowledged it with devout sincerity. The prayers and the lessons appeared to her in quite a new light, and she was struck with their suitableness to her condition. In one of the chapters she listened with eagerness to these words : “ work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” and in the gospel of the day, “ strive to enter in at the strait gate.” From these sentences she was powerfully convinced that the most unremitting diligence was requisite in accomplishing the great design she had undertaken ; that the services and duties of religion were

“ ——— not thanks of form,
A word, and a grimace,”

as she once imagined, but demanding the full vigour of every intellectual and moral faculty of her soul.

During the interval between the clergyman's quitting the desk and ascending the pulpit, she felt the most awful suspense; anxiously hoping, that the preacher might pursue what the reader had begun, and that some directions might be given to enable her to obtain the support and consolation she so earnestly desired; how was she mortified to discover, that with his surplice the priest had lost his piety, and that in the pulpit he differed in the most essential points from the sentiments he had uttered in the desk. Instead of solemnity she was grieved to observe elegant trifling, in place of fervour the most chilling apathy. From the discourse (if we may dignify a ten minutes' languid harangue with so honourable an appellation,) she learnt that a life of vain and worldly pleasure was by no means inconsistent with the spirit of devotion; that fashion and religion were compatible; that the morality of the Gospel must not be too strictly enforced; that the striking language of exhortation in the Bible was to be considered as addressed

to Heathen idolaters, sunk in the lowest barbarism and sensuality ; but that it was not to be pressed in all its energy of meaning upon civilized Christians ; that if understood literally, it could not be adapted to the state of human nature ; that if spiritual and preceptive Christianity were what it is described to be by a modern sect, which had even dared to obtrude itself into the church by law established, few, if any, could be saved ; that men were expressly enjoined not to be righteous overmuch ; that if we went to church, performed our duty, and received the sacrament, God was bound to give us eternal life.

The preacher was too polite to offend his audience by the severity of reproof, had too exalted an opinion of our common nature to suppose, that we could be sinners (at least in the vulgar scriptural sense of the term,) and too little concern for the interests of real religion to urge its necessity. Indeed, the Gospel had never been his study ; he had received the education of a college, and with a very moderate share of its learning, had acquired certain unclerical, not to say licentious habits, which all the discipline of *Alma*

Mater, vigilant and severe as it is said to be, cannot entirely prevent among her sons. He had taken orders because the church was a genteel profession, and preached as often as necessity obliged him. The morality of his discourses, manufactured—not by himself, but by the grand empiric, the dry-nurse of the church, was more lax than the morality of Epicurus ; his delivery—the reading of a school-boy of the lower forms ; and his theology—Deism with a Christian mask. He was indifferent to all religion, but, as in duty bound, to his own church a furious and persecuting bigot.

It was unfortunate for Miss Delaval that such a man was her instructor at this critical juncture in her history. She was now arrived at that awful period when her destiny seemed oscillating in suspense, and when a small influence of advice or circumstance would have the power to decide it. But however pleasing the notion, that salvation is a work of easy attainment, might be to her heart ; and however flattering to her pride, that the power of accomplishing it rested solely with herself, the indifference of the preacher operated as an antidote against his doctrine, and

she was more disgusted with his trifling, than interested with his subject.

At the conclusion of the service she flew with eagerness to Mrs. Wilmington, who was walking slowly from the church, apparently absorbed in deep meditation. As soon as they had passed from among the crowd their conversation naturally turned upon the preacher and his discourse. It was in every respect a painful subject to Mrs. Wilmington. Her views of religion, and those of the clergyman she had just heard, were directly opposite. A devout member of the church of England, giving it a decided preference to every other communion, she blushed that it should be disgraced by ministers who contradict both its Liturgy and Articles. Though incompetent to decide the violently agitated question, as to the precise theological points which the church calls upon her sons to recognize and maintain, she yet felt no manner of doubt, that a large proportion of her clergy differ as widely from Hooker as from Calvin; from the avowed and accredited Fathers of their Church, as from him they denounce as a subtle and

gloomy Heresiarch ; that in fact they are neither Calvinists nor Pelagians, Predestinarians nor Arminians, but simply *nothing-ites*, caring only for worldly aggrandizement, and merging all other duties in the zealous performance of one, on which, in their estimation, hang both the law and the prophets, namely, the duty of obtaining a better living, or a richer stall, of running the race set before them, from a curacy to Landaff, and from Landaff to Canterbury.

Though persuaded that the national establishment is “ built on the foundation of the apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone,” she lamented that its emoluments and secular patronage had so unfavourable an influence upon the character of its pastors ; and that, while it allured the ambitious, the idle, and the dissipated, to its altars, it had no power to correct their principles, or to reform their lives ; and that it too frequently received into its bosom, and rewarded with its preferments, some of the worst enemies of genuine Christianity. Mrs. Wilmington had ever considered this as a moral pestilence, the magnitude and

inveteracy of which she sometimes found it difficult to reconcile with the purity and spirituality of a truly apostolic church.

But regarding the establishment as a human institution, founded on divine principles, and knowing, that the most finished labour of man, must partake of his imperfections ; impressed likewise with the pleasing conviction, that the national church had a thousand redeeming advantages, which, notwithstanding all its evils, rendered it a most extensive and important blessing to society ; she could not consent to forsake its pale. She loved it with all its faults, and those very faults taught her charitably to interpret the motives of those who have conscientiously separated from its communion. Where *she* saw something to *deplore*, *they* might discover *much* to condemn. She could not claim for her own church, perfection ; she could not totally condemn the churches of others. In all, she perceived a mixture of good and evil. The great duty of different Christian communities appeared to her to be, the cultivation of a spirit of forbearance and mutual kindness. Her very soul loathed intolerance, and if ever she indulged the

severity of censure, it was directed against the bigots of all parties, who arrogate to themselves a kind of patent Christianity—an exclusive religion ; who are righteous in their own eyes, and despise others. An Episcopalian from deliberate choice and conviction, she preferred the regularly ordained clergy, who evince by their “preaching and living,” that they were moved of the Holy Ghost to undertake the cure of souls, to every other description of ministers. Many such she knew, and she could not but regret, that a preacher of this character did not fill the pulpit on the present occasion.

“ I think, my dear madam,” said Miss Delaval, after some desultory conversation, “ that the excellent service of the church never appeared to me so suitably adapted to the wants and weaknesses of humanity as it did this morning. Its confessions and petitions, its acknowledgments and praises, engaged my whole heart ; they seemed composed on purpose for me.”

“ Probably, my dear,” replied Mrs. Wilmington, “ you regarded them to-day with unusual attention ; or, may I not conclude, that the conversation of the last evening

produced some effect upon your mind, and led you, with more than usual fidelity, to scrutinize your own character?"

"I must acknowledge," rejoined Louisa, "what once I should have been ashamed to own, that your remarks last night did induce me to take up the Bible. I have read it with new feelings. I see that it is a very strict book, but not more strict than reasonable; and a conviction, that I have never loved the Author of my Being, with all my heart, strength, and mind, covered me with shame. I slept little, and this morning rose early to pursue the subject. With a mind by no means at rest I came to church. I know not how to account for it, but the church never appeared to me so awful a place before. I wish the sermon had been more conformed to the devotional sentiments of the prayers and lessons. Can you, my dear friend, account for the strange apparent opposition between them?"

"I was also struck with the inconsistency," rejoined Mrs. Wilmington, "and felt the most poignant regret, that the pulpit should have been degraded by a cold, ethical performance, of which, an enlightened Hea-

then would have been ashamed ; but this, my dear, is by no means uncommon. The religion of our excellent reformers the compilers of our Articles, and who adopted the Liturgy, because they cordially approved of its scriptural sentiments and the simple majesty of its style, is now an exploded system ; the doctrines and the precepts of Christ suit not our accommodating age ; and the New Testament is the greatest and the severest satire on what is called fashionable preaching. Nothing is more common than for modern divines to read in the lessons for the day, the condemnation of the sermons they intend to deliver from the pulpit."

"This," said Louisa, "in the instance of to-day, I could not help observing ; but will you, my dear Madam, have the goodness to explain to me this mystery."

"It may be variously accounted for," replied Mrs. Wilmington. "Several causes" she continued, "have united to produce a lamentable perversion of primitive sentiments and manners in the church. The Articles and Liturgy of our Establishment are Christian ; it is perfectly easy to identify them with the New Testament. Every person acquaint-

ed with the Prayer-book and the New Testament must observe a most striking similarity between them. The one is derived from the other, and founded on its authority ; and we must seek the reasons for the abandonment of its sentiments by a worldly priesthood, in the Bible itself, and the depraved principles of the human heart.

“ Christianity is a religion which is intended to form the character ; but the character which it forms, is despised and rejected by the great majority of mankind. The doctrines of the Gospel are such as level in the dust the pride of man. Its precepts interfere with his sensual gratification ; they disturb his worldly tranquillity ; they demand the sacrifice of selfishness, the subjection of passion, and the homage of the heart. To reverence Christianity, unreservedly to admit its claims, a man must be a real Christian, that is—he must imbibe the spirit of the Gospel. This is not always convenient ; yet Christianity must not be formally abolished. In order, therefore, to render it acceptable to the world, it is found requisite to alter its very character—to retain its name—but to deteriorate its nature.

“ Our reformers loved the genuine features of the Gospel ; their successors would deface them. Christianity is to them not only uninteresting, but disgusting. The emoluments of the national church, and the genteel leisure in which she indulges her clergy, allure many to her standard, who, instead of teaching others, need themselves to be taught ; who, instead of preaching Christianity, inculcate a sort of lax morality, which distributes with a profuse and liberal hand its rewards and favours on the most heterogeneous and discordant characters ; associating the ignorant and the informed, the virtuous and the vicious, under one general appellation of privilege, and promising them all (unless they should wickedly become schismatics or heretics,) a seat in Paradise ; a morality which affects to call all men brethren, in a Christian sense, though their Christianity consists in nothing more than having been brought in infancy to the wonder-working font of baptism.

“ These men never tell you what Christianity is ; they have nothing to do with its dogmas, and as for faith, the atonement, and spiritual renovation, these they leave to the

initiated into the mysteries of fanaticism, who are weak enough to believe, that religion ought to be the business of man, and immortal glory the object of his pursuit. When I hear such unqualified, daring intruders into the sacred office, I involuntarily exclaim :

“ From such apostles, O ! ye mitred heads,
Preserve the church, and lay not careless hands
On skulls that cannot teach, and will not learn.”

“ I am sorry, my dear, that I have spoken on this subject with unusual warmth, and to an unbecoming length. My zeal for the honour of our truly spiritual church (for such I deem it, notwithstanding all its defects,) must be my apology.”

“ I thank you, Madam,” rejoined Louisa ;
“ I entered upon the topic for the purpose of obtaining the information which you have kindly imparted. It is a pity that sinister motives should induce men to take upon themselves the sacred character. I have, indeed, known some of the gayest sons of fashion candidates for the gown ; but never having thought of religion myself, I saw not the inconsistency, nor did I much blame the levity of their conduct.

“ Your remarks, on the nature of Christianity, have greatly interested me. It must be astonishingly different from any thing I ever imagined it to be. Perhaps, a greater acquaintance with it will unfold to me the way in which I may obtain the divine favour, and secure immortal felicity. I confess myself to be entirely ignorant on the subject, and I conceive that very ignorance to be the cause of all my former unhappiness.”

The last observation brought them to the house of Mrs. Wilmington, with whom, Louisa consented to spend the remainder of the day, that she might converse more at large on the new subject, which now engrossed her every thought. Mrs. Wilmington endeavoured to confine the attention of her guest to inquiries adapted to the state of her feelings, and studiously guarded against the introduction of any topics on which she could not convey to her confused and hitherto uninstructed mind clear and precise ideas. She judiciously began with the beginning ; keeping totally out of view what may be called the metaphysics of Christianity, and dwelling only on its first principles, its plain and palpable rudiments.

Hearing that a very popular divine of the class of seceders, which owe their existence to the late Countess of Huntingdon, was to officiate in a neighbouring chapel, they agreed to become his auditors in the evening. Though the enemy of sects, *as such*, Mrs. Wilmington well knew how to distinguish genuine piety from the outward forms in which it was either adorned or disfigured. She preferred it in the garb of decent ceremony ; but she did not undervalue it because it was grotesquely attired, or almost denuded, according to the fantastic or perverse taste of its mistaken friends ; and as at fashionable watering places the rigid of all sects relax somewhat of their repulsiveness, and appear occasionally in churches or chapels, as whim, curiosity, or better motives influence them ; in the present instance, she overcame her own scruples, and those of her less-enlightened friend. The latter, indeed, with great difficulty reconciled herself to an appearance in a Methodist chapel ; but her repugnance was rather the effect of education than of religious prejudice ; it arose from the *hauteur* of fashion, without any mixture of sectarian intolerance.

Understanding, however, that the preacher she was invited to hear was the *élève* of a pious lady of distinction, she concluded, that he was, of course, a man of education, that his intellectual and moral qualities were of a superior order ; and that, without any great sacrifice of propriety she might, *for once*, worship the Deity in an unconsecrated building, and listen to a Christian discourse, though pronounced from unaccredited lips.

But if the instructor of the morning was chargeable with an entire ignorance of Christianity, he who assumed the office in the evening, though of a different character, was as little qualified to discharge its duties.

They were both coxcombs. Each made self his idol, but in a different way. One was vain of his person—the other of his piety ; one cared for the clerical profession only as it connected him with a splendid establishment which shed upon him a portion of its lustre—the other assumed it because it raised him from laborious dependence, and made him the oracle of his little sect. Both loved admiration ; but the ambition of one was, to shine in the circles of fashion, to be familiar with a round of lady-

ships ; that of the other, to have the credit of loathing such abominations that he might secure the applause of his hearers, and be invested with the full odour of sanctity ; but even here he was inconsistent, and betrayed the sad leaven of a worldly spirit, by affecting high acquaintance, and incessantly boasting of his intimacy with Lady B., the Hon. Mr. N., Lord R., and Sir George G., personages who, mistaking his real character, had condescended occasionally to honour him with their notice. To one of these noble families he had indeed rendered himself a very acceptable appendage, by sometimes walking with the children to keep them out of mischief, or taking the lap-dogs of her ladyship for an airing to preserve them in health.

The divine of the Establishment wounded the cause of religion by his utter indifference and levity ; the preacher of the chapel inflicted upon it a still deeper injury by the moroseness of his spirit, the pompous inanity of his style, and the ultra Calvinism of his creed. One had no religion ; the religion of the other savoured more of malignity than kindness, and while it blazed forth in osten-

tatious professions of love to his “ dear Jesus,” it had little of tender compassion towards those for whom that Jesus suffered and died. He possessed neither the meekness of wisdom, the simplicity of truth, nor the candour of charity. He had the spirit of Bonner, without its excuse; the arrogance of a pontiff, without his infallibility.

The few doctrines which he taught were an extravagant caricature of the most prominent features of the Calvinistic system. Every thing he said, was out of proportion; and, aiming at a bold singularity, he sometimes uttered the grossest absurdities. His phrases were uncouth; and, though he seldom violated the rules of syntax, he continually sinned against the laws of taste. The passages of Scripture he loved to quote were those that contained an accusation, or an anathema; and it is supposed, that of his own good-will he never read a text which even implied a beatitude; denunciation was his delight—invitation his strange work. He talked more of hell than of heaven. To all but those who favoured his peculiar views, or personal interests, he preached a Gospel of terror, but not of salvation.

On entering the chapel, the first object which attracted the attention of the ladies, was a little mechanic of the town, a brazier by trade, who, dressed in the paraphernalia of the priesthood, was pompously reading the service of the church. In the eyes of Louisa, this was little less than profanation; all her fondly cherished ideas of the dignity of the clerical profession were outraged in a moment. The assumption of priestly attire by a person, who, throughout the week, was employed in making or repairing the culinary articles of the kitchen, and whom she had beheld more than once at the Hermitage in the plain and sooty garb of his calling, she viewed as a daring affront offered to the members of the Establishment. So invincible were her prejudices that her favourite Liturgy was in this instance deprived of all its efficacy; and though the brazier might be a pious man, and in this respect better qualified to officiate than the clergyman on whom she had attended in the forenoon, yet it was impossible that she could reconcile either her judgment or her feelings to what appeared to her a strange prostitution of a service she had hitherto been accustomed to

deem most sacred. The surplice, the milk-white surplice—the sacred ephod—the emblem of holiness—the hallowed appendage of a beautiful form of worship, endeared to her heart by every powerful and pleasing association, and which invested its *ordained* wearer with at least official sanctity, to cover the shoulders of a man not two removes from a tinker! *proh, pudor!* It was not to be endured; she felt an involuntary disposition to retire, and was only withheld by a becoming sense of propriety.

The prayers concluded, a hymn was announced, for which she sought in vain in her copy of the old version and the new, bound up with her book of common prayer. “Given out,” however, as the phrase is, two lines at a time, she heard the words, and perceived that they were rhyme; but they were nearly unintelligible, and conveyed scarcely a single definite idea to her mind. The phraseology was altogether new, and the sentiments related to subjects of which she had not the slightest apprehension. This arose partly from her ignorance of the doctrines of religion, and partly from the sort of technical language in which this class of religionists

have chosen to express their devotional feelings. She was greatly perplexed, for instance, to understand the meaning of such lines as these :

“ If now I lament after God,
And *gasp* for a DROP of thy love ;
If Jesus hath paid down his blood,
To clear off my mortgage above.”

While the congregation were singing, we should say vociferating, in jiggish, rather than in solemn sounds, this piece of conventical psalmody, the popular idol ascended the pulpit. He appeared to be about thirty years of age, and presented an admirable subject for a painter, who might wish to immortalize himself by producing a fine head of Judas Iscariot. His hair was jet black, cropped close, and combed straight over a forehead which was any thing but ample. Shakespeare has exactly described it ; but we must not quote so profane a writer on so grave a subject. His eyes were small and deeply sunk, his eye-brows rather knit and broken. His nose and upper lip wore the habitual curl of contempt—which said equally to saints and sinners, “ Stand aside, I am holier than all of you.” His visage was lank, and

his complexion sallow ; in short, the *tout-ensemble* afforded a perfect specimen of the “ grace-proud faces,” so inimitably portrayed by Burns. It was the index of ineffable complacency, assuming the peculiar character of spiritual pride, mingled with its due proportion of cunning and overbearing selfishness.

Never had Louisa looked upon a countenance so ill-favoured and repulsive. As he threw an inquisitive glance around the congregation, and which, when it fell upon her, grew into something of a settled stare, she instinctively shrunk from the twinkle of his eye. It had in it nothing of the fabled fascination of the basilisk ; it was the look—not of the good shepherd wishing to conduct a newly-discovered lamb to the richest pasture, but of him whose business it is to select his victims, and then drag them to the slaughter.

At the close of the hymn he arose, and in a voice rather sonorous but louder than the occasion required, offered an *extempore* prayer, which was chiefly remarkable for its familiarity with the Deity. One moment it swelled to the insolence of demand, and the next descended to the wheedling of cant ;

and as if all the preceding devotional exercises were either forgotten or rejected by heaven, or needed confirmation from the lips of this its special favourite, they were repeated with the utmost vehemence, imbued, however, with the acrimonious spirit, and translated into the singular phraseology, of the speaker. After this address, he announced his text, which was, the interesting, but too curious question proposed to our Lord, and to which he so condescendingly and pertinently replied by intimating the difficulties of religion, and urging his hearers not to speculate, but to strive to enter in at the straight gate. It consisted only of these words: "Are there few that be saved?"

The preacher undertook to prove the affirmative of this question. In pursuance of this object, he plunged at once into the arcana of the divine decrees; proclaimed a purpose of wrath in the infinite mind from all eternity, embracing in its direful execution unnumbered millions of the human race. According to his doctrine the saved and the lost were to be considered as passive instruments of depravity or grace, without the smallest reference, on the part of either, to

their accountableness ; without the one seeking their salvation, or the other meriting their destruction. The whole was resolved into absolute, inscrutable sovereignty, and that sovereignty reprobating an infinite majority of mankind.

This statement he followed up by an appeal to facts. The world, he said, for nearly six thousand years, with the exception only of a most inconsiderable portion of its inhabitants, so inconsiderable, indeed, as not to form a millionth part of its incessantly teeming population, had been abandoned to a state which rendered its possession of the divine favour impossible. That Jews, Turks, Infidels, Mahometans, and Pagans, amidst their diversified circumstances of culture or neglect, of civilization or barbarism, were all under the ban of this irreversible decree ; that it was extremely doubtful, whether myriads of infants, who died not knowing their right hand from their left, were not lifting up their eyes in torments.

But rising to something like the fierceness of infernal eloquence, he turned to Christendom, and, as if armed with the vial of the wrath of God, he poured it upon the

healing waters of its various sanctuaries, and they instantly resembled the Apocalyptic sea, "which became as the blood of a dead man—and every living soul died in the sea."

The Catholic church—the mother of harlots, with all her detestable brood, by one sweeping anathema, he pronounced accursed. The sweet-souled piety of Guion, the celestial temper of Fenelon, the sublime intellectual devotion of Paschal, availed them not; with the spirits before the Flood, they were doomed to welter in the eternal fire.

The Protestant churches experienced no kinder treatment; but were abandoned to the same destiny; the vindictive zeal of the preacher, augmenting its fury in proportion as the different communities he denounced approximated to his own. The nearer their resemblance to the sect which he had the honour to patronize, the farther they unquestionably were from a state of grace and salvation; and as a venerable, learned and pious clergyman, belonging to the class of Wesleyan Methodists, was in a neighbouring chapel, pleading the cause of Christian benevolence, he was so incautious and illiberal as to hold him up by name to

the execration of his audience ; because he rejected the horrible decree, as the supralapsarian view of election is very justly denominated, he was described as an impious culprit, questioning the legality of the sentence, which, without any regard to his delinquency, had condemned him to misery before he had a being. In short, the conclusion of the whole matter was simply this—that heaven was the exclusive portion of this tolerant divine and his blessed adherents ; whose motto certainly ought to be “ Hell for all ; *hors nous et nos amis.*”

The nerves of Louisa could scarcely endure the violence of this tremendous harangue ; and most happy was she, to escape from a scene which inspired her with mingled terror and disgust.

Supported by her affectionate companion, she gained the street, and felt like one awoke to pleasing consciousness from the pains of sleep. The odious man, and his still more odious doctrine, she seemed almost afraid to approach again, even in imagination.

At length, somewhat recovering her almost paralyzed faculties, she exclaimed : “ I have heard much of the terrors of Calvinism—is

this a Calvinist? O! if what I have just heard be Christianity, my dear Madam, I can never be a Christian. Surely, the folly of fashion is a less evil than the ferocity of religion, if this be religion;—but no, it cannot be. ‘The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.’ The chapel in which we have been is altogether a libel on our church, and a libel on our creed. The poor infants too; but I will never, never dishonour a good God, by such an abominable suspicion; they are not lost, my heart tells me—my reason tells me—the Gospel itself tells me—they are not lost. ‘They only leave their parents for the calm of heaven.’ ”

This burst of feeling restored the amiable speaker to tranquillity; and Mrs. Wilmington, in the true spirit of Christian moderation, and with her characteristic discriminative wisdom, endeavoured to impart to her, just views of the subjects which had been so unceremoniously obtruded upon her. Truth constrained her to admit, that the sect, of which the individual they had just heard was an oracle, originated in the necessity of circumstances; and that, if it had merged into the

church again as soon as this necessity had ceased, it would have produced unmingled good to the cause of true religion. But, having made this admission, as a member of the Establishment, she was obliged to declare, that even before the death of its foundress, it had assumed the character of an inexcusable schism ; and that, standing alone in the Christian world, subjecting an institution of its own, mis-named a college, and the half-lettered novices educated there to the management of a lay-committee, formed of ignorant, but well-meaning tradesmen, it had sent forth as teachers (with a few highly honourable exceptions,) persons totally unqualified for the sacred office, who, uniting overweening confidence, with a surprising lack of knowledge, had disseminated, with a most illiberal spirit, a spurious kind of Christianity. That with minds unfurnished, and naturally incapable of understanding a well-arranged system of theological truth, they had ventured upon some of the most abstruse doctrines of the Gospel, which, taken out of their connexion, and exhibited under aspects in which they never appear in the Scriptures, were fraught with all the consequences of the

most pernicious errors ; that they had thus introduced a style of preaching which infused into all, who approved of it, a spirit of self-complacency, of exclusive attachment to their own teachers, and of bigotry and intolerance towards all who differ from them.

“ A ludicrous incident, proving the truth of this,” said Mrs. Wilmington, “ occurred in my own family a few weeks since. One of my servants is a member of the chapel where we have just been. The officiating minister, at the time to which I refer, was, in the estimation of the sect a greater man even than the present. He has been described to me as a spiritual Vulcan, whose anvil is the pulpit, from whence, with tremendous sounds, he dashes, in every direction, upon his affrighted audience, the flaming sparks of reprobating wrath. The poor girl, after witnessing one of these furious exhibitions, on returning home, gave the following account of the preacher and his sermon :

“ Dear man ! he is a most blessed preacher. He hallood—aye, I fancy he did halloo—oh, I shall never forget, how he told us all to read our Bible ;—‘ read it,’ said he, ‘ this very night ; or, you may die, and go to hell ;

and the flames of hell, I promise you, will not afford you light enough to read by ;' then he was very fine about an angel that was to destroy us ; and make us shriek and groan as he bore our guilty souls down to the bottomless pit. Precious man ! He looks big and awful. I *loves* to hear him ; last night he made my flesh crawl so, and I was *afeard* like ; yet, I was so happy ; ah, he's the only preacher for my money."

" The person who uttered this language, I believe, to be truly conscientious and most exemplary in the performance of every duty. But her mind is sadly perverted by her religion, and her temper is far from being amiable. Accustomed only to spiritual cordials and stimulants, to the strongest excitements of emotion by the succession of preachers she usually hears, some of whom continually cry '*destruction!*' as if the Gospel was not the ministry of reconciliation ; and others incessantly proclaim '*privilege,*' as though the prerogatives and authority of the Maker, Governor, and Judge, were annihilated by the mercy of the Saviour ; she is the slave of alternate gloom and joy ; and should a preacher, by any chance, be sent

down by the lay Sanhedrim, whose sermons are grave, discriminating, and *practical*, she is perfectly wretched ; and bitterly complains, in the phraseology of the initiated, that her soul has no food—that it is as dry as Gideon’s fleece—that she is one of Pharoah’s lean kine—and that, unless some Boaz be commissioned to lead her to the full sheaves of comfort, she must starve in the wilderness. To be spiritual, she says, under such preaching, is almost as great a task as that which the king of Egypt imposed upon the Lord’s dear people, when he ordered them to make bricks without straw. Though she is kind to us all, and, I believe, is sincerely attached to the family, yet she does not scruple to say, that we are in the gall of bitterness ; and were she not afraid, that in making the attempt to persuade her fellow-servants to flee from the wrath to come, she should be opposing the eternal purpose of heaven, she would be happy to impart to them the knowledge of the truth. As it is, she consoles herself with the idea, that their salvation or destruction is no concern of hers.

“ I know, my dear Louisa,” continued Mrs. Wilmington, “ what repugnance you

must feel towards a system, which, under any circumstances, can produce such effects as these. But we ought carefully to distinguish between the real nature of a thing, and its accidental associations. It is impossible for us to determine, how much of fanatical error and delusion may be permitted to mingle with genuine piety, to mar its loveliness, and to neutralize its power, without wholly destroying its saving benefits and moral effects.

While I confess to you, that among the numerous classes who ‘profess and call themselves Christians,’ the one now under our review, has its full share in depriving the Christian doctrine of its efficacy: yet, have I no manner of doubt, that many who belong to it, are far better than their creed, and, that in spite of its deteriorating influence, they are exemplary in their deportment, if not liberal in their spirit. For the errors of their belief, I claim no charity; they deserve to be sincerely reprobated; and I entreat you not to identify them with Christianity. Let not prejudice arm you against the religion of the Gospel, on account of any unfavourable and repulsive aspect, in which it may be presented to you. In itself,

it is always glorious—a pure spiritual essence, which nothing can deteriorate.

“ If it force its way into a narrow heart, it struggles to expand it. If it dwell in a vulgar mind, its tendency is to refine it; and, when associated with error, and a spirit foreign to its own, it labours to subdue the power of the one, and to soften the asperities of the other. Where the teachers of different sects, though of opposite views on a variety of minor points, infuse into their discourses an equal portion of great scriptural truths in their simplicity and fulness, they are all useful, and in some cases equally useful. By this admission, however, I would not be thought to confound truth with error, or for a moment to insinuate, that error, even pardonable error, may not affect and weaken the operation of truth. I am, however, fully persuaded, that it is only when the name of Christianity is given to a system *entirely* opposed to its real character—when a subtle delusion is substituted in its place, claiming the divinity of its origin, and the sanction of its authority, that the best interests of mankind are radically and extensively injured by any thing in the form of religious profession.

With such a counterfeit Christianity the Christian world should keep no terms. It ought not, for a single instant, to be recognized as genuine. It is not enough, that the coin should bear the image and superscription of the prince; it ought, at least, to be standard gold. If the alloy be such as materially to depreciate its value—if the baser metal preponderate—it ought to be rejected as spurious, lest the general credit should be brought into disrepute. It appears to me, that the great Catholic community of Christians have too long suffered the interests of their ‘one faith, one baptism, and one Lord,’ to be sacrificed by allowing themselves to be associated in name and intercourse with a system of teaching, from which every thing that implies accountableness and moral obligation, is totally excluded. For in my view, this is an Anti-christ, so far as it obtains, as fatal to true religion as the grand apostacy of Rome.

“You ask me, my dear, if, what you have heard, are the doctrines of Calvin—and, whether the sermon of to-night is a specimen of Calvinistic preaching? I deliberately and conscientiously answer, No. And the greatest

possible injustice is done to this reformer, and those who adopt his system, by the imputation. Calvinism is never more misunderstood, or more grossly misrepresented, than when its peculiarities are exaggerated, and its subserviency to the formation of the principles and habits of *practical* piety, is lost sight of.

“ Not only the tendency, but the whole intention of the discourse, which has led to these remarks, has been to bestow on the belief of certain doctrines, combined with strong religious emotion, the importance of an ultimate object. But, genuine Calvinism, so far as I understand it, is the reverse of this. It proceeds on the principle, that Christianity is a practical system ; it never divests it of its precepts, and its sanctions ; or represents it as a mere charter of privileges, investing a certain class with a title to eternal life, independent of moral discrimination, and a purifying and transforming influence.

“ In the judgment of charity, I would hope, that the person, whom you have mistaken for a Calvinist, is not aware of all the conse-

quences to which his mode of stating his views of Christianity, must inevitably conduct every one who sincerely embraces his doctrine ; but, I certainly think, that such preaching goes to the extreme point, where Christian verity ends, and another Gospel is maintained, false in its views, immoral in its tendency, and destructive in its effects. If it may not be termed the full-grown plant, it is the germinating principle of that heresy, which an eloquent favourite of mine has finely described, as ‘ not so much a *religious* error, as a *specious impiety*, designed to subvert all religion : the disciples of which, in their own estimation, are a privileged class, who dwell in a secluded region of unshaken security and lawless liberty, while the rest of the Christian world are the vassals of legal bondage, toiling in darkness and in chains. Hence, whatever diversity of character they may display in other respects, a haughty and bitter disdain of every other class, is a universal feature. Contempt and hatred of the most devout and enlightened Christians, out of their own pale, seems one of the most essential elements of their being ; nor were the

ancient Pharisees ever more notorious for trusting in themselves, that they were righteous, and despising others.'

" I have been the more particular in distinguishing the errors of an Antinomian tendency from the Calvinistic doctrines, because the latter have now their full measure of the world's contempt ; and through them, all serious religion, both in the Establishment and out of it, is stigmatized and reproached. If a clergyman preach with due earnestness the Gospel of Salvation, if he ' point to heaven, and lead the way,' and there should gather round him a congregation of pious, benevolent, and active individuals, both the pastor and his flock are instantly denounced as a set of sour and bigoted Calvinists. The odium, which this implies, is aimed not at a human system, but at the doctrines and influence of Christianity ; but, if Calvinism be really understood, the imputation of it ought not to be deemed a disgrace. I am no Calvinist, at least, no further than the Articles of the Church may be identified with Calvinism. Yet, I have observed with regret, that persons, the most unqualified to state the profound doctrines of the New Testa-

ment, which Calvin laboured so earnestly to elucidate, are always the most eager to rush upon its mysteries. Thus, has Christianity been deeply wounded in the house of its friends ; and truth compels me to add, that among those, who, under the pretence of maintaining the spirituality of the Gospel, have destroyed its holy and blessed tendencies, must be ranked, many of the preachers of the ‘ Connexion,’ as it is termed, of the late Countess of Huntingdon. In the course of my remarks, I have denominated this connexion a ‘ Sect,’ using the word in its offensive and legitimate sense ; but it scarcely rises to this bad eminence. It has the intolerance of a sect—its dissociating operation ; but, is altogether destitute of the redeeming and softening influences, which Christianity imparts to most of the larger communities which assume its name. It cannot with propriety be classed with any description of seceders ; but may be considered as a throbbing and inflamed excrescence on the comely form of the Church of England.

“ Happy, my dear, should I have been, to have spared you this discussion ; but my deep anxiety for your happiness has induced

me to endeavour to remove from your mind a prejudice against zealous and devoted piety, which the sad exhibition of this evening could not fail to excite."

Louisa gratefully acknowledged the kindness of her friend ; but returned home, with agitated feelings, and a mind greatly perplexed.

C H A P. XII.

“ — Like the mountain oak,
Tempest shaken, rooted fast —
Grasping strength from ev’ry stroke,
While it wrestles with the blast.”

Montgomery.

WHATEVER predisposition Miss Delaval felt towards religion, when she heard it described in the correct, yet fervid representations of Mrs. Wilmington, it was impossible for her not to experience a sort of mental revulsion, when she reflected on the contrasted, but equally forbidding exhibitions of it which she had witnessed from the pulpit. The one, repelled her by its dead formality; the other, like a dark and lowering spectre, rudely chased away the beautiful vision, which was just beginning to dawn upon her imagination. A strange misgiving rushed upon her heart. What! if religion, after all, should be no more than a state expediency, or an enthusiast’s dream? If those whose province

it is to teach it, differed so widely in their opinions, and if all, with equal confidence, appealed to the Scriptures to support the most opposite doctrines, can those Scriptures be true? How fearfully did they *seem* to sanction the preacher, who clothed the Divine Being in all the attributes of Moloch, and with what readiness did he quote passage after passage, to confirm the dogmas of his terrible creed?

Thus, Ignorance and Infidelity conspired to weaken the new-formed purpose of her mind, and to arm her with prejudice against the only object from which she had expected to derive real and permanent satisfaction. Beginning to speculate, she neglected to pray; having no clue by which to direct her inquiries, every question led to doubt, and every doubt placed her at a greater distance from the truth. Thus it is, that the ingenuous and sincere are often perplexed, and, at length, disgusted with religion, by those who undertake to instruct them in its doctrines and its duties. Thus, the fair promise of a character formed upon the great principles of Christian piety, is blighted in a moment by the hand that ought to cherish and sus-

tain it. Miss Delaval, till she heard the boisterous fanatic, who confused all her ideas, and revolted all her feelings, was unquestionably in a state of mind highly favourable to her salvation ; but instead of leading back the penitent wanderer, he drove her farther from the fold ; instead of pointing her to the good Shepherd, he terrified her with the portrait of a Being, omnipotent in wrath, who delighted only in vengeance. In this sad and perilous course of mental deviation, she was providentially arrested by an unlooked-for train of circumstances.

Calling on her friend for the purpose of opening her heart, and suggesting all her dismal apprehensions on those points of religion, every allusion to which, on account of their abstruseness and comparative unimportance, Mrs. Wilmington had taken the utmost care to avoid ; she found her in the depth of affliction. The calm spirit of resignation had, indeed, breathed its placid beauty over her countenance ; but it was marked with irrepressible sadness. The approach of Louisa suffused it with the momentary flush of anguish. Tears came seasonably to her relief ; and, after a little interval, she in-

formed her, that her only daughter, who had been in Devonshire on a visit, was about to return to her; not, as she had fondly anticipated, in all the bloom of health, and, as she hoped, the permanent friend of Louisa, but a dying invalid, who, like a passing sojourner, would only be able, to salute her and depart. Such, she confessed, were her gloomy forebodings; although the letter which contained the painful intelligence, talked of hope, and encouraged her with the prospect of ultimate recovery. But thus she had once before flattered herself in vain. In earlier life, she had sat under the shade of one, fair and fresh as the gourd over the head of the prophet; and, while she pleased herself with its growth and its loveliness, God had prepared a worm to smite the gourd, and it withered; yet, had she no just reason to complain. “The Lord gave, and the Lord had taken away.” Still her “refuge was on high;” her heart had been wounded—not broken; it had been bereaved—not abandoned. He that did “tempt Abraham,” did also sustain and deliver him. The Patriarch’s God was her’s. He knew her frame, and would not “break the bruised reed.”

Under the influence of emotions, powerfully excited by apprehensive dread of an event, which, perhaps, more than any other, crushes the heart of frail humanity, her language partook of all the venerable simplicity of the Scriptures. On this occasion, there was a sacredness in the allusions and style of her remarks, unlike the usual strain of her conversation when her heart was at ease. In a truly devout and cultivated mind, this is perfectly natural. Mrs. Wilmington's reverence for the oracles of heaven, was too profound, to allow her to adopt, for the common purposes of human intercourse, the scriptural phraseology, for which the ancient Puritans and Covenanters were so remarkable; and whose mantle, in this respect, seems to have fallen upon some of their modern successors. Express references to the sacred book, and sentiments uttered in its consecrated and peculiar terms, were, with her, the effect of solemn feeling, in seasons when the interests of her personal salvation were involved, or when her piety (if we may so speak) was summoned to stand forth from the objects and incidents of life with a distinct and characteristic prominence.

Such an occasion was the present. The rising storm, that was about to wrest from her the last tie which held her to earth, led her involuntarily to bethink herself of the anchor of her soul, which was linked to that within the veil in heaven ; and she naturally put forth her hand to prove, that it was near—that it was sure and stedfast—that it was ready for her support, and would not fail her in the hour of trial ; she therefore “ felt and handled the good word of God.”

Sorrow and calamity are the surest tests of religious principle ; and religious principle rises to moral sublimity, when it teaches the suffering individual to breathe its glorious spirit through its own hallowed medium.

One hour's sympathizing converse with her interesting companion, in this season of bitter anguish, banished all Louisa's scepticism ; and though it did not explain to her reason, the mysteries of religion, it proved to her heart, its reality. She saw its passive energy, imparting all the Stoic's firmness, without its insensibility ; refining the sense of pain, yet raising the sufferer above its

power; and she concluded, that, notwithstanding all the difficulties with which it perplexed her understanding, that the system must be divine, that could so strangely blend, in one bosom, the most exquisite tenderness of emotion, with the loftiest magnanimity of principle; that, at the same moment, humbled and exalted—humanized and deified, the subject of its influence.

Julia Wilmington, whose indisposition, had alarmed all the anxious fears of her fond mother, was, indeed, in a state of health which might well justify the foreboding apprehensions of all who knew and loved her. “She was waning to the tomb.” Her countenance, once bright and rosy as that of Hebe, now exhibited only the hectic, fitful bloom of that insidious disease, which, like a canker-worm at the root of beauty, completes its fatal ravages ere the beholder is aware of its existence. The lovely flowers, thus smitten, display for a season their primitive lustre, and emit all their natural fragrance; for a long interval, a sickly delicacy marks their decline; but still they occasionally brighten with more

than original splendour—still their odour is ineffably sweet ; and, while we fondly gaze on the trembling stem and drooping leaves, hoping that the next gleam of sunshine will invigorate and revive them—the sun wraps himself in clouds—the wind of the desert passeth over them—and they are gone.

The brief history of the lovely invalid, who was now to be introduced to Louisa, and to inspire her with more than a sister's fondness, is but another simple tale, added to the many which narrate the fatal effects of early and unfortunate attachment preying upon a heart of sensibility, and preparing for its hapless victim an untimely grave. It is touching, from its simplicity ; and, though it bears a sad and obvious resemblance to most that have preceded it, yet, it is marked by peculiar circumstances, which, while they create the tenderest sympathy in the woes of the beauteous sufferer, excite, at the same time, the highest admiration of her character. Her misfortunes are not to be attributed either to a defective education, or a want of genuine self-respect. They must be traced to the simple humanity of her gentle and

amiable spirit. Her principles were divine, but her heart was human ; she was devout, but her very piety awakened and refined the generous affections of her nature, and increased her susceptibility.

Worthily to love, and fondly to devote ourselves to the happiness of another, who deserves our high regard, is not condemned by religion. It is not even a weakness, which it permits and deplores ; but a virtue, which it sanctions and commends. And the heart that is deceived, or betrayed, needs not augment its anguish by self-reproach. Love is not only an innocent, but a noble passion. When guided and controlled by religion, it is the germ of all the social virtues—the cement and the solace of the various relations of human life. When rewarded with the hallowed possession of its object, it strews the path of duty with flowers, and scents the air with fragrance ; when unfortunate, and ill-requited, it becomes, at length, absorbed in high and holy principle ; investing resignation with unwonted sublimity, and extracting, from earthly disappointment, the calm satisfaction of heavenly hope. The

process, by which it is thus transformed, may impair the fragile tenement in which it is enshrined, and the dross of mortality, in such a furnace, may melt away into its kindred earth ; but the soaring, unrobed spirit, returns to God who gave it, and at last enjoys repose where it first derived existence.

C H A P. XIII.

“ He seem’d to love her ; and her youthful cheek
Wore for awhile the transient bloom of joy ;
And her heart throb’d with hopes she could not speak,
New to delight, and mute in ecstasy.”—*Anon.*

JULIA WILMINGTON was born in the early months of her mother’s widowhood, and was first cradled in the storms of the Indian Ocean ; for it was on her passage to England, after sustaining a shock almost unparalleled in the history of human suffering, that Mrs. Wilmington was presented with this interesting pledge of an affection, doomed, alas ! to weep over its object—hurried from her arms, in a moment of fancied security, by the hand of treachery and violence. The lovely infant, uprose beneath her eye in all the charms of new existence, and by its helpless dependence and artless smiles, beguiled her back to life and hope.

“It seemed,” as she once remarked, when relating her sad story, “like a cherub of mercy, sent from heaven to awaken her from the stupor of despair; and then to assuage the anguish of returning sensibility.” Thus, powerfully excited to feeling and reflection (for, from the moment of her husband’s catastrophe, till her infant saw the light, she had been little more than an unconscious statue) her principles came to the aid of her reason, and she resolutely determined to gather up her almost wasted energies, and to consecrate them to the happiness of this new appendage to her being. But for this, life must have been a blank, and the grave a welcome asylum to her bereaved and desolate heart.

Many live-long hours would she spend in her cabin, watching her sleeping charge, and giving the silent expression of tears to the melancholy feelings which her own forlorn situation naturally excited. But, when her infant awoke and required her attention, every sorrow vanished at the call of duty. When restless, she would cradle it in her bosom; and when the almost unconscious creature smiled, or seemed to smile, the

heart-touching gleam of sweet intelligence shed its light upon her soul, and caught by the momentary fascination, she was happy. But

“ I may not paint those thousand infant charms ”

which cheated the sufferer of her woe, and through whose soothing influence, she slowly recovered the tone of her mind. Fortunately for Julia, as her faculties became capable of receiving instruction, her mother increased in the ability and disposition to impart it.

Perfectly acquainted with all that is necessary to the formation of the female character, both as it regards accomplishments, which refine the manners, and principles, which direct the conduct, Mrs. Wilmington's first care was, to qualify her daughter for the station in society she was destined to occupy ; and more especially to prepare her, as a Christian, for that immortality, which it is the high prerogative of Christianity to reveal and bestow. She drew up, for her own guidance, a system of education, comprehending both these objects ; and she proved its practicability by strictly adhering to it. In this system, nothing that embellishes life, nothing that exalts it, was undervalued or forgotten.

Each acquirement, each pursuit, had its allotted portion of time and attention, according to its comparative worth and importance. Religion, of course, held the first place. It was with her the Alpha and Omega of female education ; she considered woman, both in her political and domestic character, to be infinitely indebted to its influence ; and that she was never so truly and so naturally herself as when acknowledging its authority, and obeying its dictates. “ Men,” she was accustomed to say, when arguing this important question with her fashionable associates, “ may possess great qualities, and perform great actions, that are not consecrated by the blessed spirit of religion. The strenuous and tumultuous destination of man, allows and requires a certain spirit of roughness—a preparation for self-defence—a kind of latent hostility about him ; but the natural flow and tendency of the female character is in the channel of goodness. Man, brought up for the field or the flood, the bar or the senate, must be armed with a spirit suited to the ungentle encounters he may meet with ; but woman, from the hour of her birth, seems consecrated to the cultivation of whatsoever

things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report."

"And how mighty," she would sometimes exclaim, "are the obligations of British females to that religion which they treat with so much indifference. What has not Christianity done," she would ask with enthusiasm, "for my fair countrywomen? It has done for them, that, which neither their nature, their habits, the constitution of society, nor the laws of legislators, could do for them. It has elevated them to their true dignity in existence. Ought they not, then, to pay their vast debt to Christianity?"

"I have visited countries, where the Gospel is perverted; and I have dwelt in others, where the innumerable population are almost strangers to its name; and in all these countries, women are no more than toys and slaves. Where they are most regarded, they rise no higher than to be splendid victims on the altar of sensuality. In the wildest regions of the earth, and in the most civilized, where Christianity is not professed, woman is equally the object of cruel caprice; every indignity is offered to her reason, and she is scarcely raised above the level of the brutes

that perish. Shall then, women, in this Christian land, who are admitted with the lords of the creation, to an equal participation in knowledge, in social rights, and rational freedom, shall they suffer the Gospel, which has conferred upon them benefits so invaluable, to plead with them in vain? By all means, let them be refined, elegant, accomplished, every thing their rank demands, and society expects; but let them be also devout—let them feel, that their truest dignity is that which comes from above—their best refinement, the sensibility of a tender conscience—their most attractive charm, “the beauty of holiness.” With this spirit, Mrs. Wilmington herself had been very early imbued. Her acquirements and talents, and she eminently excelled in those which tend most to the embellishment of society, were employed, to adorn religion, and to display its power. “She used them with such sweet and chastised enjoyment, with a pleasure that rose so purely from the pleasure of others, that the exercise of her acquirements seemed like the practice of a virtue; her very indulgencies were duties. She spent not the precious ointment on her-

self ; she broke it at her Saviour's feet, and the incense of her heart went up along with it."*

An example so amiable and attractive failed not powerfully to impress the susceptible bosom of the infant Julia. Her mother's character, ere she could understand the principles on which it was formed, delighted her imagination, and lived in her heart. It was the model she loved to contemplate, and which she constantly endeavoured to resemble. With such an instructor, she made the most rapid progress in her studies ; and, at the early age of fifteen, was as distinguished for mental endowments, as she was unrivalled in personal beauty. She grew to be one of the exquisite specimens of loveliness, which nature occasionally forms to be the admiration and delight of mankind.

" Oh, never was a form so delicate,
Fashion'd in dream or story, to create
Wonder and love in man."

She realized the vision of the poet, when he described the beauty of his imagination :

* Maturin.

“ _____ She was very fair ;
 _____ and her thick tresses were
 Of the bright colour of the light of day ;
 Her eyes were like the dove’s, like Hebe’s, or
 The maiden moon, or star-light, seen afar ;
 _____ her brow
 Was darker than her hair, and arch’d and fine ;
 And sunny smiles would often, often shine
 Over a mouth, from which came sounds more sweet
 Than dying winds, and waters when they meet
 Gently, and seem telling and talking o’er
 The silence they so long had kept before.”

But, like the mountain-rose, her loveliness
 exhaled its “ sweetness in the desert air ;”
 her life was one of seclusion and reflection.
 She was a stranger to the world—she knew
 it but in books, or in converse with her mo-
 ther ; and, from such report, was happy in
 her distance from its factitious scenes and
 imposing vanities.

On their arrival in England, Mrs. Wil-
 mington sought retirement in the bosom of
 her native village ; where, without interrup-
 tion, she could devote herself to the favourite
 task which affection and duty had imposed
 upon her, and enjoy occasional intercourse
 with a few of her earliest and most highly-
 valued friends. Among these, it was her
 privilege to number the rector and his family.

Mr. Evelyn, who had been her father's intimate associate, and her husband's tutor, was a venerable parish priest, of the now almost obsolete school of Hooker and Herbert. In his character, he was equally removed from the coldness of the mere ethical formalist, and the tropical fervour of the eccentric zealot. He was neither a professional automaton, who could only ring changes on the terms and phrases—duty, sectaries, apostolic succession, church and king, passive obedience, and non-resistance; nor was he a fiery pretender to excessive sanctity, who, with lawless daring, leaped over all ecclesiastical bounds, and gloried in his irregularity. He was, on the contrary, the noiseless and unostentatious dispenser of knowledge, purity, and comfort, among his immediate flock; nor did he care to be known beyond the precincts of his allotted station. He felt that his proper business was, to move in his own orbit. There he shone with steady lustre; and his light equally cheered the mansion and the cottage. He was the rich man's guide, and the poor man's friend. He was cheerful with the happy, and participated, with heartfelt delight, in the innocent recrea-

tions of the village ; but, in the house of mourning, he was at all times a ready and a welcome guest. From the cheek of misfortune, he wiped the tear of anguish, and shed the balm of sympathy, to alleviate the sorrow it was not in his power to remove. To every distress, he knew how to apply its appropriate remedy.

The pulpit was his throne—not where he reigned ; but where, as the ambassador of Christ, he entreated men to be reconciled to God. In his earnest and simple addresses, it was difficult to ascertain, whether majesty or meekness predominated. His hearers were always reminded of him who spoke as never man spake. He regarded his parish as his family, and his children all loved him. Tythes and surplice-fees were paid punctually, liberally, and without a murmur. The office which he filled, answered all the purposes of a divine institution ; and those on whom it conferred its invaluable benefits, were happy to convert the provision of law into the offering of gratitude.

To the guardian care of this excellent man, was committed, by the will of his father, Edward de Clifford, a youth of the fairest promise ;

and who came to reside with Mr. Evelyn, about the period when Julia Wilmington had reached her sixteenth year. Edward was just eighteen. His form was manly, and his countenance highly prepossessing ; but his manner was a little embarrassed, and the ingenuousness of his disposition somewhat concealed by a distressing degree of *mauvaise honte*. Having studied under a private tutor, and lived in comparative retirement, he was free from the faults which are usually contracted in large seminaries ; but he was likewise destitute of the advantages conferred by a public education. Having never been exposed to collision and competition, his faculties were not sharpened to acuteness. He neither marshalled them for attack, nor formed them into an attitude for defence. He was a stranger to envy, distrust, and malignity. The unchecked kindness of his benignant spirit brightened every object, and poured its genial influence on all around him. His tutor was a Christian ; and, therefore, had never put into his hands, for the purpose of making him a classical scholar, those books, by whose abominable wickedness the minds of our youth are contami-

nated as soon as they can learn their meaning, and long before they can appreciate their beauties. He was rather contemplative than clever ; and was less attracted by the living world, than by the charms of inanimate nature. He held communion with his own thoughts, and conversed but little with his fellow beings.

Designed for one of the learned professions, his sentiments and habits were most uncongenial with the pursuits in which he was destined to engage—

“ Search of deep philosophy,
Wit, eloquence, and poesy,”

were arts which he loved ; but the Justinian Institutions, Coke upon Lyttleton, the dry investigation of cases and precedents, and the strenuous elbowing through crowds of rivals and competitors so necessary to eminence and success at the bar, were foreign to his nature. He would have been happy to have lived and died in the solitudes of Beau-lieu ; but the prospect of leaving it for tumult and conflict, filled him with distressing apprehensions long before he felt the tender and powerful attraction, which rendered it his only world.

Whoever lingered with musing rapture in the deep and romantic solitudes of the New Forest, and gazed upon its awful and romantic loveliness, without cherishing the precious recollection through all the after-years of life !

“ The warbling woodlands, the resounding shore,
The pomp of groves, the garniture of fields—
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the song of even—
All that the mountain’s sheltering bosom shields—

were here ; nor did they make their appeal in vain to the heart of Edward de Clifford.

To his dreaming soul, “ the sight of nature in her glorious mood,” spoke a language which the new thoughts and emotions it inspired, enabled him to interpret. The forms of grandeur and of beauty, threw their light into the inmost recesses of his spirit, and awakened, into conscious existence, feelings of which they seemed to be no more than the archetype.

Thus, mighty was their influence over him before he became acquainted with the interesting being, whose presence imparted to them a fascination and a charm, which, as a garland, nature condescends to receive from

the hand of love, and to wear for the lover's sake. When his heart was gay, he loved to rejoice with creation in its matin song; the lark, beneath the rosy cloud, often raised his grateful, adoring thoughts, to the heavens; after which, she seemed to aspire. And, in the hour when melancholy would throw her sombre spell around him (for there were seasons when he was sad, and knew not why), he would seek the twilight groves; and, far removed from mortal ken and observation, cherish those high musings of the soul which speak her conscious immortality, and exalt her into regions where she feels herself disenthralled from material chains, and beyond the boundaries of mere sensible existence.

There was scarcely a spot amidst the knolls, glens and woodlands, on either shore of the river of Beaulieu, which he had not explored, and which was not endeared to him by the recollection of some peculiar feelings and thoughts which it had witnessed or occasioned. In one of his moody rambles, he mused, in youthful ecstasy, till the fire kindled, and he traced, with rapid thought and trembling hand, the subjoined

effusion. It was his first effort, to express the hitherto undefinable emotions of his heart.

GIVE me the soul of Poesy,
The skilful hand, the raptur'd eye,
The pure celestial fire ;
The Doric reed, the magic shell,
Aërial fancy's mystic spell,
And wild seraphic lyre.

What though misfortune rend the heart,
And Envy point her keenest dart,
To wound a Son of song ;
And Poverty and foul Despite,
In dark, insidious league unite,
To do him ruthless wrong.

The Poet feels " the joy of grief,"
His harp affords him sweet relief,
It dissipates his care ;
Exulting Hope, her visions forms,
The dear illusion ever charms,
And banishes Despair.

Yes ! Poesy has charms indeed ;
Where she bestows her heavenly meed,
The mind is truly blest ;
The heart her inspiration warms,
Enraptured with her lovely charms,
" Has joys the very best."

The man that feels her magic pow'r,
Though all the storms of life may low'r,
Looks through the murky gloom;
Gives to the "viewless forms of air,"
Ideal beauty, "passing fair,"
And with them loves to roam.

The wise and sober clods of earth,
Wonder what demon at his birth,
With madness turned his brain;
Well pleased, that at their natal hour,
No frowning star had noxious power
O'er their kind fates to reign.

While he the rapt enthusiast knows,
When on his grave the violet blows,
His name shall ever bloom;
Immortal wreaths his brows entwine,
And Fame inscribe her deathless line
On his distinguished tomb.

O, for a Poet's ecstasy!
Come, ye sweet nymphs of harmony,
And tune my numbers wild;
Help me to reach the Aëonian hill;
Bow me submissive to your will—
A meek poetic child.

Then, as at early morn I tread
The sylvan haunt, the dewy mead,
Or climb the mountain grey,
Aurora's vermil tints I'll view,
And breathe a song inspired by you,
To the bright god of day.

Then, will I walk at evening shade,
Or through the wood, or through the glade,
And hail the queen of night ;
Or, mark the northern streamers gay,
Where throngs of elfin spirits play,
Dancing on beams of light.

And when nor stars, nor moon-beams play
Illumes my melancholy way,
I'll seek the silent grove ;
And sit me down to meditate,
And mourn thy worst of ills, stern Fate—
The pangs of hopeless love !

Or, when the dark cloud hovers round,
And thunder rocks the trembling ground,
I'll hie me forth to roam,
To hear the raging of the storm,
To view the lightning's varying form,
Darting athwart the gloom.

And, where old Ocean's surges pour
Through the black rocks their horrid roar,
The dismal scene I'll scan ;
List to the spirit of the wave,
Screaming around the watery grave
Of some departed man.

Thus, will I weary life beguile,
And, at the ills of fortune, smile—
A simple son of Rhyme ;
And, sweet enthusiast, Poesy !
Thou shalt my loved companion be
Through the sad course of time.

A heart thus sensitive to the charms of nature, and capable of such excitement, only required an object to love, to become completely enamoured and devoted. It was not, indeed, entirely a stranger to love's imaginings. A floating vision of ideal beauty would sometimes present itself and recede, too exquisite to be breathed on by gross mortality, or to be accurately defined in its exact proportions by the eye that gazed upon it. Yet, from this vision, a heart-delighting form lingered on the memory.

“ A gentle spirit, and young, with golden hair,
And eyes as blue as the blue dome above,
And a voice as tender as the sound of love.”

When he first beheld Julia Wilmington, she rose upon him like the morning-star of his fancy. It was no longer a dream. He was broad awake in the world of sober reality ; yet was there a being with whom he conversed, whose smile of ineffable sweetness, and whose innocent gaiety, charmed, while they awed him into distant embarrassment and reserve. His feelings were too profound for utterance, yet too intense to

escape observation. It was evident, that some overwhelming care laboured in his bosom. But his manner was so cold and repulsive, that his most intimate friends did not venture to question him on the subject. His exterior presented the frozen surface of an Iceland mountain, while within him raged a fiercer fire than those of *Ætna*. So distant was his conduct towards the sex, that none suspected the real cause of his melancholy. The deep reveries in which he was constantly plunged, appeared to resemble madness rather than love. His looks and actions seemed to say

“ Man delights not me, nor woman either.”

Julia Wilmington he studiously avoided ; yet, if ever chance brought them together, his cheeks were suffused with a flush of delight. He would have given worlds to make her comprehend his feelings, but they were imprisoned in his heart. The eye, Love's fleetest messenger, and which speaks volumes in a glance, he could not entrust with the awful secret, which yet, he almost died to disclose. Nothing is so mighty, and at the same time so timid, as the first youth-

ful passion before it is revealed to its object. It absorbs and governs the entire being, and holds, in its tenacious grasp, both character and destiny ; yet, can the lightest footstep in a moment vanquish its most determined purpose, and the sweetest look make it quail with unutterable terror. In vain did Edward de Clifford resolve, that every prospective interview with his mistress should find him less embarrassed, and more master of himself ; in vain did he task his brow, and school his heart, for the encounter which he dreaded. No sooner did he attempt to speak to her, and her fine liquid eyes fell on his, than he blushed, stammered, and was silent. The strange awkwardness of his behaviour, and the apparent sullenness of his temper, often provoked her ridicule, and sometimes she was half offended at his rude neglect ; but her playful raillery only increased the confusion it was intended to dissipate, and she began to think him as disagreeable as he was mysterious.

Julia Wilmington, with all the superior qualities which constituted the charm of her opening character, was, however, neither more

nor less than woman. Gallant and courteous attentions from the other sex, she regarded as the prerogatives of beauty ; and she was not a little mortified to observe, that the only individual of that sex, of her own age, with whom she was accustomed to associate, and whose countenance certainly expressed intelligence and sensibility, seemed to treat her with studied and marked indifference. She was a stranger to the passions, and never once imagined, that romantic and devoted attachment could thus paralyze the faculties. Accident, however, dissolved the spell by which the mind of Edward de Clifford had been so long entranced, and revealed to the astonished Julia, the secret of his heart.

One day, carelessly turning over the leaves of a volume of poetry, he met for the first time, with the exquisite lines of Sir Walter Raleigh to his Mistress ; in which the Poet beautifully describes the agonizing silence which profound and undeclared love never fails to inspire in the presence of its object, and makes a quaint but pathetic appeal to her compassion :

“ A beggar that is *dumb* you know,
Should challenge double pity.”

Just before his attention was arrested by this little poem, Julia had been rallying him, on his aversion to company and his general want of spirits, and to escape from a subject which almost stung him to madness, he had taken up the volume in question. No sooner had he read the verses, which so exactly portrayed his own case, than, with an effort, almost supernatural, he exclaimed, "Will Miss Wilmington allow me, in the words of a poet, to present her with my defence and apology? Here"—said he, pointing to the lines, but utterance failed him, and he attempted to close the book; but this the eager curiosity of Julia prevented. Glancing her eye over the page, her prophetic soul comprehended the whole mystery; she seemed, however, not to understand it, and endeavoured to descant, but not with her usual felicity, on the merits of the performance. After this incident, she, in her turn, became thoughtful and reserved. Edward, it is true, had not declared himself, nor was she obliged to infer the state of his heart, from the trifling circumstance, which had just occurred. Yet, that circumstance opened a wide field

for her imagination, and awakened sensations in her heart, which she had never before experienced. She was loved, and by an individual with whose sorrows she had unconsciously trifled. The recollection of her innocent *badinage*, brought with it, regret. It had the appearance of injustice and cruelty. Pity gave place to censure; and pity is nearly allied to love. Her lover, too, in some measure, relieved from the burthen which oppressed him, hailed her approach with evident delight. His conversation was no longer broken and confused; but gleamed with sentiment, and frequently sparkled with gems of poetic thought.

But we must not dwell too long on the circumstances of what our graver readers may, perhaps, denominate, “a vain amatorial tale.” Those who feel an interest in tracing the progress of passion, in the gradual developement of its sensibilities and tenderesses, will easily imagine, how habitual interchange of sentiments, inspired by nature and refined by poetry, must operate on two youthful spirits, romantic in their character, with hearts uncantered, and possessed of that

innocent feeling that gives life all its freshness.

Frequently at the hour "when day and evening meet," would they steal from the family circle, to hold pensive and deep communion with the shadowy scenes of twilight. Love breathed over all, and touched, with melancholy softness,

"The waving wood and the evanishing sky."

But they enjoyed the highest luxury of emotion on those evenings (always dear to fond attachment) when the heavens presented one canopy of lucid crystal blue—when the bright stars, in solitary distance, twinkled in the depth of ether, shooting their cold and uncertain beams on "tower and tree"—while the moon, walking in her vestal glory, "pursuing as from the bosom of eternity, her calm and destined way," poured down the silver of her smiles upon all of lovely and sublime, which the ocean and the forest exhibited to their enraptured view.

For a long season, the happy pair lived on each other's thoughts; thoughts which required not words to express them, which

would have lost all their freshness, and their power in passing the deep gulf, which, in the solemn season of profound and exquisite feeling, divides the tongue from the heart.

Uninterrupted in their intercourse, and enjoying the approving smiles of mutual friends, the feverish dream of passion subsided into the calm of assured affection. The tempest ceased, and the sublime of emotion gave place to the quiet beauty which diffuses its placid influence over the agitated spirit. Every day proved, or seemed to prove, how necessary they were to each other's happiness ; and they looked forward, with tranquil hope, to the period when they should be united beyond the power of separation—at least on this side the grave.

Julia, however, for a few months, was removed from Beaulieu, and her lover, for the first time, was doomed to experience the pangs of absence. In the spring she promised to return ; with what feelings he anticipated the happy hour, the following lines will disclose :

TO JULIA.

When lonely wand'ring where we oft have been,
I trace with conscious eye the well-known scene ;
Each fond memento rises to my view,
And soothes my pensive heart with love and you.
Sweet musings of the past beguile my way,
And here I fain would spend the live-long day.
To busy memory every spot is dear,
And fancy almost dreams that thou art here.
With thee I walk, with thee converse again,
And absence wounds with mitigated pain.
But what are joys which only Memory knows ?
The dying fragrance of the wither'd rose ;
Sole vestige of a glory passed away,
The parting sigh of beauty in decay ;
Which tells of pleasure it could once dispense,
And saddens while it gratifies the sense.
Celestial Hope must raise this faded flow'r,
And aid Remembrance with her magic pow'r.
Hail bright enchantress ! bid the past revive,
In future scenes let joys departed live ;
Thy spring returns, sweet promise of the year,
And nature's smiles proclaim her MAY is near.
Oh ! visit thus my heart with genial ray,
And while I joy to meet the lovely May,
Let one more lovely, to my soul more dear,
Than all fair nature yields, to my fond gaze appear.
Tell me of halcyon hours I yet shall prove,
When beauty's eye shall wake the soul of love ;
When soft delight shall o'er my senses steal,
And ev'ry look our mutual bliss reveal.
And shall these halcyon hours again be mine ?
Can Hope deceive the votary at her shrine ?

O'er life's sad path illusive meteors glare,
Which promise rapture, while they mean despair.
By these allured, by these false lights beguiled,
I oft have wandered in the devious wild ;
Till tangled in the maze and lost in night,
The gleam I follow'd, vanish'd from my sight.
But no—my Julia—it can never be ;
The Hope that borrows her sweet smile from thee,
Speaks heavenly truth and never can deceive ;
Her kind inspiring voice I must believe.
Yes! we shall meet and mingle joys again,
Together traverse this delightful plain ;
And yield to Memory pleasures yet to come,
Which Hope shall cherish in perennial bloom.

Whatever principles may form the character, in every bosom, where love is admitted, he will assert his paramount authority. Even religion feels his power, and is strengthened or debased by his influence. If the object of our regard be distinguished by the glorious qualities of devotion, and those qualities form the basis of our attachment, that very attachment implies, in ourselves, a kindred excellence. To love is to possess them. And, just in the proportion, in which we welcome them to our hearts, do they shed their divine radiance upon our character ; but if we are allured by the charms of mere mortal loveliness, if we are

enamoured of a creature in whose heart the sacred flame of piety has never been kindled, the celestial fire, on our own altar, diminishes in lustre, and quivers in the pestilential vapour which threatens to extinguish it.

In his own family, Edward de Clifford had witnessed the brightest examples of religion; and at Mr. Evelyn's every thing had conspired to impress him with its supreme worth and importance. Yet was his piety rather the effect of circumstances than of choice. It is true, he understood its doctrines and observed its forms, but he had never imbibed its spirit. The feelings of a religious kind of which he was sometimes conscious, were inspired either by the sublime and beautiful in nature, or by the grand and pathetic in the gospel. He was altogether unacquainted with Christianity as a restorative system, provided for sinners and designed for their renovation. His devotion, therefore, partook more of a poetical than of a spiritual character. He was (so to speak) a Miltonic Christian, and derived his views of religion more from *Paradise Lost*, than from the Scriptures. He was more charmed

with its glory than with its truth ; with those parts of it which exalted the intellect, than with those which humbled the heart.

The piety of Julia, on the contrary, was the blessed result of deliberate and heart-felt conviction. It was a divine influence, pervading her whole being, mingling its essence with her faculties and affections, and constituting at once, the principle and the beauty of her life.

The external deportment of Edward de Clifford was pure and blameless, and Julia's was no more. It was therefore perfectly easy for each to mistake the character of the other. They appeared to be equally devout ; —the difference was not in the expression but in the motive. Edward was captivated by the person of Julia ; and he imagined that he paid equal homage to her principles ; and Julia naturally inferred, that he could not himself be destitute of what he professed so much to admire in her. Nor was he insincere in this profession, nor ought she, with no other evidence before her, to have drawn a different conclusion. She would have shuddered to form an intimacy,

so endearing in its nature, and necessarily fraught with the most important consequences in her future life, with an individual who knew not the God of her fathers, and who could not walk with her in the same path to Heaven. Not only to themselves, but to their most judicious relatives, the lovers appeared to be, in all respects, congenial, and happily suited to each other.

CHAP. XIV.

“ The poet’s lamp, as poets tell,
Is kindled only at the skies ;
But there’s a flame---the birth of hell,
Which sometimes lights the poet’s eyes :
Such was De Rancè’s.”---*Cunningham.*

THE profession to which Edward de Clifford resolved to devote himself, required, in order to the entering upon it with the best advantage to himself, that he should graduate at an English University. Mr. Evelyn, therefore, determined on sending him forthwith to Oxford. The good man was fully aware of the temptations and dangers of a college life, especially to one who had seen but little of the world and whose studies had been hitherto pursued in domestic privacy and seclusion. But he hoped and prayed, that his beloved charge might

escape the perils which would surround him. He was armed with good principles, with good sense, and, above all, with a virtuous attachment, which he trusted would fortify him against the assaults of impiety, and the blandishments of folly. He had also acquired a taste for literature, and was not insensible to the stirrings of ambition. In short, he possessed all the requisites of a *reading man*, except, that the indolence of poetical dreaming and versatility of mind, sometimes produced irregularity in his application, and a fitful transition from one study to another.

Arrangements were made for his admission into ———, and he took an affectionate leave of his friends. With Julia he lingered long ; but the agonizing moment at last arrived, and dashing the starting tear from his eyes, he rushed into the carriage which was to bear him far away from all he loved on earth.

Insensible to the rapid motion of the vehicle, and the lapse of time, he was not aroused from his profound reverie of sorrow till he found himself at Southampton ; from whence, he was to depart for Oxford, by the

regular conveyance, on the ensuing day. A feeling of desolation came upon his heart, as he was ushered by the waiter, into the room of the Inn, where he was to pass the evening alone. No Julia was there to greet his approach by a timid glance of delight,—no Mrs. Wilmington to cheer him with her maternal smile, and he must retire to his chamber, unblest by the devout and affectionate benison of his revered and beloved guardian. For that night, the past occupied his undivided attention, and especially, recent scenes of love and rapture passed in review before him, while, with a sigh of weary anguish, he exclaimed, “Will they ever return?” He slept but little, and rose early with a feverish pulse to pursue his journey.

In the stage which was to convey him to his destination, he found but one passenger, who, like himself, had taken his place to Oxford. The mind of Edward was too deeply interested in its own sad and agitating ruminations, to observe with minute inspection his fellow traveller—yet the slightest glance convinced him, he could be no ordinary man. He was of middle age,

and had somewhat of a foreign air. As he sat uncovered, the contour of his head and features, exhibited a fine specimen of classical expression and beauty; but the general physiognomy, to an attentive observer, revealed a character, formed of all the elements which constitute intellectual grandeur and moral depravation; the *mens divini*or, and the darker passions seemed to divide the countenance between them. The forehead, shaded by Hyperion curls, expressed loftiness of thought, the godlike brow, and full, penetrating eye, gave assurance of decisive energy, more mighty for evil than for good. Around the mouth, lurked contemptuous scorn, and sarcastic bitterness, while over the whole, was diffused the soft illumination, of what Longinus has denominated the Το σφοδρὸν καὶ ενθουσιαστικόν. Edward was no physiognomist, and in the then state of his feelings, had no disposition to speculate on the probable character of his companion; but the gloom which hung so heavily upon his heart, was not impervious to the rays of genius. The majesty of intellect had always commanded his reverence, and when,

dwelling with rapture on its glorious creations, he had often longed to worship in its presence. He had ever been its devoted idolater, without sufficiently appreciating the moral qualities by which it was either exalted or debased. The appearance of the stranger before him, realised all that his imagination had conceived of intellectual sublimity. What if he should prove to be one of the master spirits of the age? It was possible,—this idea had no sooner entered into his mind, than it awakened all his enthusiasm—and for a moment, even Julia was forgotten, in the visionary hope, that he was about to drink Castalian waters at the fountain. The respectful gaze of admiration, which involuntarily accompanied this thought, was not lost upon the stranger. In his turn, he perused the features of the interesting youth, thus thrown by chance into his company, and strongly prepossessed in his favour, soon contrived to draw him into conversation. His colloquial powers were, indeed, of the highest order, and so insinuating were his manners, that even diffidence and reserve felt assured in his presence. He could unveil the heart, and

those who stedfastly resolved to "give their thoughts no tongue," were not able to resist the witchery which he threw around them, but in spite of themselves, admitted him to their confidence. He led conversation, but did not engross it. His wonderful intellect, grasped every subject within the range of philosophy, science and literature. The happiest illustrations came at his bidding, adorned with all the felicities of taste. Even common thoughts, when uttered by him, sparkled with unusual brightness, and things, universally known, after passing through his mind, appeared in all the freshness of novelty. When he reasoned, he rather seduced than convinced, and when he declaimed, it was in the fervid style of poetical inspiration. Not only was he imbued with the spirit of the ancient classics, and familiar with the finest models of art, as described in story, and in song; but sustained by the enthusiasm which these records inspired, he had traversed every region, and worshipped, at every shrine, where genius had left a vestige, or a memorial that he had ever been. Yet was this highly-gifted individual to be numbered

among the most guilty of his species ; and with all his assumed gaiety, he was more miserable than the first murderer! “Pleasure’s palled victim ;” and the daring apostle of Infidelity, he lived, but to extend the empire of human wretchedness. It was his sole ambition to render others as depraved, and as hopeless, as himself. The more effectually to accomplish this Satanic purpose, he had organized a system of opinions subversive of revealed religion, and at war with the holiest ordinances of society. And that these pernicious opinions might spread their moral desolation over the fairest, and by far the most important portion of the community, he did not convey them through the medium of essays, and philosophical discourses addressed to the learned, but with a baseness peculiarly his own, arrayed them in the fascinations of poetry, and sent them forth, to corrupt the innocence of the rising generation.

The influence of such a writer, in a country where his talents are commanding, and his productions popular, is worse than the worst plague of Egypt—for that merely cut off the first-born, and in every house there

was only one dead ; but this, infects with its malignant virus, all the members of a family, and devotes to ruin, the whole youthful population of the land. It resembles the blight in nature, which in one fatal hour, destroys, before the fruit is set, the entire promise of the year. Pestilence and famine are less evils to a state, than lascivious and impious publications ; in which, genius betrays the cause of purity and social goodness, and becomes the pandar to Belial and to Moloch. If a man, of the highest order of mind, misleads when he ought to instruct, he may do mischief as long as the world lasts ; he is a nuisance to future ages, and lays a snare for those who are yet unborn.

The Harold's, the Beppo's, and the Don Juan's of the present day will do more to subvert the foundations of human virtue and human happiness, than all the speculative and merely argumentative works against Christianity that have ever issued from the press. These tempters have the Syren's voice, and their song will allure thousands to their fate. How highly then, must we estimate the *humility* of the noble author of these performances, when he says : " He

who can reconcile Poetry with Truth and Wisdom is the only *true Poët.*" Truth and Wisdom ! Falsehood and Folly !—surely in his lordship's vocabulary these are convertible terms. If the character of his poetry, is to rest on its ethical excellence, he must soon degrade from the rank of poets.

The companion of de Clifford had studied in the school of Byron. Childe Harold was the god of his idolatry, and the model of his imitation ; nor were his talents at all inferior to those of his extraordinary master. He even exceeded him in the extravagance of his horrors, and came not a whit behind him in the licentiousness of his descriptions, and the impiety of his principles.

Such was the being with whom, the susceptible, and as far as it regards Poetry, the enthusiastic Edward de Clifford was to travel a distance of fifty miles.

In a very few moments the kindling spirit of charmed intercourse began to glow and brighten as the stranger poured forth the classic treasures of his mind. Whatever subject was touched upon, he presented it to his companion under some new and beautiful aspect. To every enquiry of Edward,

his answers were prompt, and he appeared to feel the highest pleasure in awakening and satisfying his curiosity. With all the modern European writers, and their works, he was familiarly acquainted; and while he gave a rapid sketch of the men, he interspersed his narrative with judicious and ingenious criticisms on the peculiarities of their intellectual characters and pursuits. One moment, he would relate an interesting anecdote, and the next, repeat a fine passage from some favorite poet. Lively *Bon mots* and grave irony he uttered with admirable *naïveté* as suited the occasion, and the theme. Edward was entranced with delight. Never had he acquired so much information in so short a time; and never before, had the paths of knowledge appeared to him strewn with flowers of such exquisite fragrance and beauty. The stranger, fully aware of the yet innocent and untainted character of his youthful associate, rather insinuated his peculiar opinions than directly announced them. He scarcely adverted to religious topics; but whenever they fairly presented themselves,—he professed a general reverence for religion; but hinted slight objections to certain doctrines which

he affirmed to belong equally to the systems of Paganism and Christianity. He loved, he said, the religious spirit, wherever it existed in the pure simplicity of holy nature; but, when adulterated with human passion, and debased by the gross forms and symbols of human invention, he thought, that its general influence was anti-social and mischievous. Some religions, he was of opinion, by their direct operation, made human nature worse than they found it; while others, by aiming to improve it beyond its capacity, by different means had produced the same result. Mystical Christianity possessed a character of sublimity, which impressed his imagination; but humanized Christianity, the Christianity of schools and churches, disgusted him by its intolerance, and its subservience in promoting the worst schemes of the worst men. He did not like the taste for damning each other, which all the various sects of Christians had acquired, and the indulgence of which, appeared to afford them supreme delight. What particularly offended him was, the Crusade, which the most strict, and unquestionably the most virtuous body of Christians, were systematically carry-

ing on against the liberal spirit and noble attainment of literature. He hated the verbal decorum of the age, and entertained serious apprehensions, that the Christian Observer and the Evangelical Magazine would soon be the only standard classics with the Christianised part of the nation. He perfectly concurred in the opinions of a celebrated writer, whom he was proud to rank among the most intimate of his friends: namely, that in these days, the *primum mobile* of England is cant. Cant political, cant poetical, cant religious, cant moral; but always cant, multiplied through all the varieties of life. It is the fashion, and while it lasts, will be too powerful for those who can only exist by taking the tone of the time. "I say, *cant*; because it is a thing of words without the smallest influence on human actions."

These sentiments were not delivered in the consecutive form in which they are here brought together; they were rather intimated than insisted upon—and when they seemed too violently to disturb the prejudices of his auditor, they were instantly qualified, and made to give place to more welcome themes.

Arrived at the termination of their journey, the travellers agreed to spend the evening together. After the pleasant refreshment of coffee, the stranger invited his new-formed acquaintance to take a survey of the city—its public buildings and delightful walks. The time which this occupied, was employed in conversation, excited by the objects, which either roused the curiosity or called forth the admiration of Edward. His companion, at length, took occasion to advert to the new scenes which were about to open upon his inexperience. He had passed through them all, and was therefore, well qualified to caution and direct him. He described the society of the university in its various gradations with great humour, and contrived to throw an air of ridicule on the extravagant pretensions of some of the colleges.

The profound learning of the more celebrated professors he characterized as grave stupidity; and the religion of the whole body, as the slovenly form of thread-bare hypocrisy. He insinuated, that a few men of the different colleges, who had genius and spirit—and who had all the prizes at their command, regarded the entire establishment with sove-

reign contempt; but submitted to its irksome and antiquated regulations as a matter of disagreeable necessity. To some of these, his intimate friends, he promised to introduce de Clifford, in whose success and happiness he professed to feel no common interest. At parting, he presented him with a copy of his works, and assured him of his sincere friendship.

That a youth scarcely nineteen, and a novice in the world, should be charmed with the talents, and flattered with the notice of a man of genius, and who had acquired high literary distinction, was perfectly natural. Edward was amazed at the good fortune which had, so unexpectedly, enriched him with such a friend; and his first letter to Julia contained a glowing description of his journey, and a finely drawn portraiture of his companion.

On the ensuing morning he waited upon his private tutor, and was conducted by him to ———. Having gone through all the requisite preliminaries, he took possession of a suite of rooms, and was instantly surrounded by a number of benevolent and disinterested tradesmen, who professed to

have no pleasure in the world equal to that of accommodating the under graduates on their arrival, with every thing necessary to their respectability and comfort; as to charges, though in the way of business such trifles could not well be dispensed with, yet as they were never anxious for payment, and as, indeed, this was a matter of perfect indifference, they would only take the liberty of making those who honoured them with their commands, *nominal debtors* in their books to more than double the amount of value received. In proposing terms so very liberal, these gentlemen, however, always took special care previously to ascertain, the family, the connexions, and probable means of the party they so earnestly wished to oblige.

Edward, who had never been a calculator, surrendered the whole affair of fitting up his apartments in the best style to those who assured him of their zeal in his service; and, in a few days, he was more splendidly lodged than any nobleman on the establishment. This, of course, attracted the notice of all the idle, dissipated men in the college, who communicated their information to others of a similar character in the university. When,

therefore, Edward appeared in the public room, he was treated with the most marked respect. All were desirous of being honoured with the friendship of one who seemed heedless of expense, and who, it was supposed, must have ample resources. Those who had worn their own credit thread-bare, and who wished, in some degree, to repair it, by introducing a *good man* to their impatient tradesmen, paid court to him, and expressed the utmost solicitude to guard him against imposition. Evening parties were formed to welcome him, which it was incumbent upon him to invite in return. Execrable wine and late hours, disqualified him for study, and he began to lounge away his mornings in the rooms of men who wasted their whole day in idleness. Sometimes he would seriously determine to resume his sober habits, and to read for honours. But his companions would, on such occasions, rush upon his seclusion, and bear him off in triumph. Among these, were individuals of fine natural abilities, who had distinguished themselves when boys at Eton and Winchester; but whose buoyant spirits and social qualities, had hurried them into ex-

cesses, soon after their matriculation at Oxford. These were the chosen associates of Edward. Though at first averse to conviviality, yet, finding, that the exhilaration of wine and company, enabled him to conquer the *mauvaise honte*, which through life had proved the bane of his enjoyment, he soon became reconciled to the pursuits of those who had contrived to unite a taste for literature with dissipation of manners. With his fellow traveller, whose productions he enthusiastically admired, he maintained an interesting, but to him a most dangerous correspondence.

Frightful were the ravages, which were made upon his principles during a single term. On returning to Beaulieu to spend the long vacation—he thought the scenes were changed, and wondered at their former fascination. Domestic duties and pleasures he regarded as restraints—and even Julia seemed less beautiful and charming. Yet were there moments in which his better feelings triumphed.

Reminiscences of the past came upon him as delightful visions, and he regretted that they were gone. At such sea-

sons, the rush of tenderness was irresistible—his heart, not yet callous, felt the appeal of nature, of friendship, and of love—and with a burst of agony he would exclaim, “O that it were with me as in days that are past!”

He wished, and yet he dreaded to return to Oxford. He had formed resolutions and bound them with solemn oaths upon his soul, which he had a strong presentiment he should violate, and thus fearfully hasten the total depravation of his character.

What he viewed with such trembling apprehension, actually took place. The baleful principles of what has not been unaptly called the Satanic school of poetry, which, infallibly lead to the contemptuous breach of all social ties—the dissipated habits, induced by a residence at the University during three years, and a long vacation in the Metropolis, spent in the circles of fashion, to which he was introduced, by the individual who, like his evil genius, had become the controller of his destiny, completed the ruin of Edward de Clifford. It was a painful, a gradual and a vacillating process, but such was its final—its fatal result.

Dæmoniacal genius, in this victim, had ano-

ther and not an inglorious triumph. And let the authors of such mighty mischief, exult if they can, in the blasting energy with which they scathe the living temple of the Most High—let them, with the malice of fiends, extinguish the hallowed fire upon its altar, and desecrate the Holy of Holies where the Divinity is enshrined ; but the hour is coming *and now is*, when the insulted Majesty of Heaven will avenge his own wrong ; and when society, shaken to its foundations by their daring impieties, will turn with indignant vengeance upon the enemies of God and man,

Intellectual talents, are the noblest gift of the Almighty, but they involve their possessors, in high and solemn responsibility. Prostituted genius is the nearest resemblance of the spirit of evil. It looks like Satan clothed in the garb of an angel of light. By many, its real character is unsuspected. Others tolerate its wickedness on account of the splendour with which it is invested—the very reason why they ought to shrink from it with disgust : but the wise and the good, must equally dread and abhor it.

—“ I’d rather be the wretch who scrawls
His idiot nonsense on the walls ;
His gallant bark of reason wreck’d,
A poor, quench’d ray of intellect ;
With slabber’d chin and rayless eye,
And mind of mere inanity ;
Not quite a man, nor quite a brute,
Than I would basely prostitute
My powers to serve the cause of vice,
To build some jewell’d edifice,
So fair, so foul,—fram’d with such art,
To please the eye and soil the heart,
That he who has not power to shun
Comes, looks, and feels himself undone.”

Cunningham’s De Rancè.

CHAP. XV.

“ My pale and gentle beauty, what a heart,
Had he to wrong thee.”—*Barry Cornwall.*

IN our narrative, the transition from virtue to vice, in the character of Edward de Clifford, may appear to be too sudden, and therefore unnatural. We can only sigh, and answer, such things are. There are facts of daily occurrence, which set the probabilities of fiction at defiance. Reality is not unfrequently far more extravagant than romance. The lights and shades of a picture distantly resemble nature, but they come not up to the truth and power of nature itself.

When a moral transformation, in such a mind as that of de Clifford, once begins to operate, its progress is inconceivably rapid.

By those who feel shocked at the abruptness of the change, it should be remembered, that his principles were first assailed through the medium of his imagination, an imagination which in his best days required the incessant control of a vigilant and powerful understanding. The chambers of imagery in his heart (to employ the striking allegory of the prophet) were no sooner touched with the magic wand of the licentious poet, than they instantly flew open; the pestilential vapours rose with all the horrid forms, which lurked in their darkness into the regions of the fancy, and tainted with their gross pollution, the noblest faculties of the spirit. Happy had it been for him, if, like Sir Philip Sydney, he had met with a Languet in this most important crisis of his destiny; whose eulogium the young Arcadian thus pronounced:

“ With his sweet skill, my skilless youth he drew,
“ To have a feeling taste of him that sits
“ Beyond the heavens.”—

“ With old true tales he wont my ears to fill,
How shepherds did of yore, how now they thrive,
He liked me, but pitied lustful youth :
His good strong staff, my slippery years upbore ;
He still hoped well because I loved truth.”

Instead of such a guide, philosopher, and friend, it was his sad mishap to meet, in evil hour, with the temptation he was least able, because least inclined, to resist. Suspicion was always foreign to his nature—nor did he ever dream, that in the living world, a being could be found, who

“ Under fair pretence of friendly ends,
And well placed words of glozing courtesey ;
Baited with reasons not unplaussible.”

could

“ Wind *him* into the easy-hearted man,
And hug him into snares.”---*Milton*.

There was likewise something so captivating in the wiles of the sorcerer, that when he was most under his power, he imagined himself to be most at liberty ; and so blind was he to the dire effects of the poison which wrought such dismal change in his moral being, that he did not “ once perceive his foul disfigurement.” At Oxford too, the *Alma mater* of so many profligates, he was exposed to all the allurements of actual dissipation. It was there

“ the lewd and lavish act of sin,
Let in defilement to the inward parts.”

There he learnt to indulge the base desires of sensual nature, and to forget all the high and holy purposes which religious principle and virtuous love had taught him to cherish.

It was not till his last term at the University, that he suffered himself to be hurried, by his companions, into criminal excesses of conduct ; and it was under their fatal influence, that he began to treat his once loved Julia, with marked neglect. In his two preceding visits, this amiable girl had felt, that her lover was greatly altered from the Edward de Clifford to whose vows of attachment she had once listened with the purest delight : then he was ingenuous ; his eye told her, quick as thought, what he felt and understood. His brow was unclouded and his temper unruffled. He was, likewise, devout. He needed not to be reminded of the hour of prayer. The Sabbath he hailed with sacred pleasure, and sought the temple with willing feet. Now he was reserved and mysterious. His countenance often betrayed anguish, which he laboured in vain to conceal, and the tones of his voice, were occasionally petulant and harsh. To reli-

gious duties he submitted from a sense of decency, rather than from any apparent consciousness of their importance; and the Sunday, and the sanctuary, he regarded with equal indifference. Beaulieu was no longer his home; indeed his bosom was altogether a stranger to its quiet joys. Yet it was remarkable, that just in proportion as he became alienated from the objects once dear to his youth, his imagination described them with exquisite truth and feeling—they lived in his poetry—but not in his heart.

Julia trembled with apprehension, as the keen penetration of love discovered to her the painful secret which other eyes were slow to observe. The conviction preyed upon her spirits, yet she clung to hope. His letters were still tender and affectionate. To her, he was the same, and yet—another. His love was unabated, so she fondly believed; but she feared that his general tastes and habits had experienced an entire revolution. For two years his correspondence glowed with all the passionate ardour which genuine love inspires. But, at length, completely subdued by vice and wretchedness, he wrote but seldom—his phrases were more studied

—there was much profession with little feeling. He was always in a hurry, and usually began and ended with awkward and unmeaning apologies.

It is impossible to describe the agony of Julia, when the first well-founded suspicion arose in her mind, that she had out-lived affection, that she had reposed her dearest hopes on worthlessness. It was not resentment which she felt—that might have sustained her. Nor could she endure to believe, that Edward, *her* Edward, was indeed the wretch he seemed. It could not be. He was still generous—noble—and devoted to her. It was only a momentary aberration; he had forgotten himself, under some strange influence, which would soon pass away. She could not realize the desolation that was coming upon her. Like a poor hunted bird, her heart still returned to the place of its affections—in vain was it rudely repulsed—if, for an instant it flew off, it would settle again, where all its cares, and all its tender-nesses were centered.

This was the state of her feelings, when she received a letter containing the following extraordinary sentences. It is difficult to

say, whether they were written under the influence of inebriety or madness.

“ Julia—a truce to hypocrisy.* It is in vain for me any longer to conceal from you my real character. I am not a Christian. Indeed, I know not what I am. I bear the fabled Hebrew’s curse. My mind wanders—my heart is distracted. I was once happy, and you were my heaven—yes, it was you I worshipped—not God. I imagined it was devotion, when I accompanied you to the

* This was the phrase employed by a certain oracle in the infidel school of poetry, to his bride, on the morning of his nuptials, and immediately on her stepping from the altar into the carriage. For many months he had persecuted her with his addresses. Aware of his profligate habits, she shrunk from a union with baseness. At last, however, overcome by the semblance of a passion, which she imagined to be real, and which she hoped might be the means of drawing him from the epicurean sty, where he had grovelled so long—she imposed upon him a year’s probation; promising to become his wife, if, during that period, he would abandon his “fellow bacchanals,” and “lemans dear.” He consented,—performed the task, and carried the—prize the prize which he lost no time in converting into a victim of savage brutality. “A truce to hypocrisy,” said the wretch—“I will have ample vengeance for my year’s abstinence.” And this too, at the moment when the sounds “to love and to cherish,” had just escaped his lips, and almost before they had died away in silence. Is it necessary to add, what all the world knows---the monster kept his word.

altar of religion. It was only love. You will not, cannot unite your fate with an unbeliever. We have now no sentiments in common—yet still, you are the star of my destiny. I shall travel, I can never rest. But your dear image shall be the companion of my wanderings. The bright visions of innocent, happy days shall sometimes break upon the settled gloom of my spirit—and scare the viper from her prey. I am unworthy of you—live—but not for another. Forget me—can you forget me? Heaven grant you may.”

* * * * *

* * * * *

This insane violence did not wound—it crushed the heart on which it fell. It produced—not emotion, but the fixed stupor of despair. Roused by the entrance of her mother—she cast upon her a piteous, imploring look—pointed to the letter, and then hid her face in her bosom. For one moment she awoke from her young dream of bliss, and the next, was a lifeless statue in her mother’s arms. Several days elapsed, before the numbness of the soul gave way,

and the icy fetters in which it was bound, melted into tears; the shock was fatal, yet, for a season she seemed to recover. The sustaining power of religion did not forsake her in her utmost need; when her heart rejected every other consolation, this was administered by the hand of an angel. The following unfinished lines, bear date many months after she received the communication which annihilated all her earthly prospects, and sadly prove, that affection may long survive hope. It is perhaps, needless to add, that they were never intended to meet any eye but her own.

Can I forget you?—Ask the silent hours,
That glide unseen by ev'ry human eye;
View me awhile, when radiant morning pours
Her glitt'ring colours o'er the illumin'd sky.
Ask, while each lovely flow'r erects its head
And hails with fragrance sweet the rising morn,---
Why the fair tints that once were mine are fled,
And left alone within my breast, the thorn.

Can I forget you?—Ask the midnight hour,
When all is silence round my lonely bed;
'Tis then for thee I tears of anguish pour,
And chase soft slumbers from my aching head:
Or, worn with grief, or spent with fruitless sighs,
Should nature yield, at length, to sweet repose,
In dreams, I see thy form belov'd arise,
And feel a sad renewal of my woes.

Can I forget you? In the social hour
 Why shed I oft the strange unbidden tear,
 And turn indifferent from the wonted power
 Of scenes that late were to my bosom dear?
 And why has solitude such charms for me
 Above each joy that friendship can bestow?
 Alas! because I weep unseen for thee,
 And undisturb'd indulge my silent woe.

Can I forget you? Ask a throne of grace,
 A throne where mourners love to pour their sighs,
 Unheard by all, save one, that holy place,
 Has witness'd oft for thee, petitions rise:
 And rise they shall, 'till heaven's eternal will—

.

Here the manuscript abruptly breaks off, and is almost illegible. The lovely sufferer had evidently blotted it with her tears.

It has been justly observed, that to the comprehension of love, nothing is so difficult as the science of forgetfulness. It is impossible to turn off the mind at once from an object it has long dwelt on with pleasure. How sweet is the relief which, in such a case, genuine piety affords. It converts affection into supplication, and reveals a bosom, into which the heart may pour all its delicate sensibilities and sorrows, without

fear and without a blush. Julia had been taught from earliest infancy, the vanity of all created good—she had been warned of the treachery of the world, and of the weakness of her own heart. She had been told, that happiness could only grow and flourish in the regions of immortality, and that when planted in the human breast, it would wither and die, unless refreshed with dew from the everlasting mountains. These assurances were now confirmed by the stern monitor, Experience. Now she knew, what once she only believed; yet could she not immediately command her affections from earth. But, though she could not soar to the height of divine enjoyment, she sometimes felt the sweetness of a spirit resigned to the Divine will;

“ She bow’d her head in quietness:---she knew
Her blighted prospects could revive no more,
Yet was she calm, for she had heaven in view.”

One dictate of love and piety she resolved to obey, though the very idea of the agony it would inflict upon her feelings overcame

her, and she had made many fruitless attempts to perform the painful duty. This was, to return the letters of her faithless lover, accompanied with an earnest and last expostulation on the subject of his infidelity. She did not hope, at least, *she thought she did not* hope, to win back his estranged affections. She was only deeply concerned for his eternal happiness. A few fragments from this generous effort of a breaking heart, shall close the chapter, and the volume.

* * * * *

“O Edward, you are not so fallen, as to ridicule the weakness of your once-beloved Julia. I confess, that to make up this packet, to resign for ever to their treacherous owner, all the fine, eloquent and tender expressions of regard, which made me too happy, has cost me many a severe pang. But this is nothing,—to you it is nothing; and it is not, on my own account, that I intrude upon you, these unwelcome lines. Though you love me not, I am still your

friend, and if the sacrifice of my life would restore your character, and bestow the peace you once enjoyed, you cannot conceive with what satisfaction I would lay it down.”

* * * * *

“You have abandoned me, but you first abandoned yourself. Is it possible, Edward, that *you* can be an unbeliever? O, what is to become of our hearths, and our altars, if the flower of our youth is to be thus withered—if domestic pleasures and rational devotion are to be renounced by the generation now rising upon the world, for the heartlessness of wandering bliss—and the gloomy hours of infidelity:—surely some strange divination, some ruthless enchantment, must be against you. Cradled in the arms of piety—like Samuel, early in the temple found,—the child of many prayers, how can you be an Infidel?” * * * * *

* * * * *

“What argument, of greater power, can be brought against the sad delusion into which you have fallen, than the misery it has inflicted upon yourself, and the shame and the regret which it has brought upon all who love you? Surely, that must be the worst species of madness which laughs at virtue as an idiot’s dream, and which labours with the exasperated fierceness of an infernal spirit, to exclude, even the idea of it from the universe.

With you alas! and with such as you, life has no duties, because it has no hopes, no joys. Essentially misanthropic, self is your only idol; and in all modern and ancient mythology, this is a deity the most capricious and the most cruel :”

* * * * *

“Knowing as I do, the truth of the Christian revelation (and what offence has it ever committed, to falsify its character), I sometimes look at you through its medium, and my heart sickens—I cannot endure the ter-

rifying vision. I am a weak girl ; I know I am very weak, but yet I would struggle with the martyr for his stake, and almost forego his crown, could my expiring agonies avert from you, the doom which Christianity denounces against those who wilfully reject its mercy.”

* * * * *

“ The juggling fiends that have cheated you of your reason and your faith, will leave you, Edward, when you need the arm of friendship and the heart of love. They will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh. They are only the sunshine friends, that ‘ throng your blooming summer bower.’ Alas ! when the hour of remorse shall come, and come it will,—who will be near to comfort you. Your poor, despised, rejected Julia, will be far, far away. The flowers of the coming Spring will shed their fragrance on her grave—but her last prayer shall be offered for the lost sheep in

the wilderness, wounded and ready to
perish !”

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END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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ERRATA IN VOL. I.

Page 1, (motto) after Mosse, dele !

— 20, line 13 from top, for “ the discovered,” read “ *she*
discovered.”

— 248, for “ awful and romantic loveliness,” read “ awful
loveliness.”

— 269, dele To

— 298, line 14, for “ gloomy hours,” read “ gloomy *horrors.*”

A Short History

of the *Republic of Venice* from its
first foundation to the present time
by *John Smith* Esq. of the Middle
Temple





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